

Journal, 1944.

934

THE JOURNAL
OF
FRANCOIS MIGNON

May 22, 1944 - December 31, 1946

also:

letters from James Pipes to
Francois Mignon 1944 - 1946

935

May 22nd, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

So many things to be reported, - so many things already
left unreported.

First off, the matter of the chemise! They arrived
at such a propitious time, - and I am ashamed of myself for
having let so much time elapse without acknowledging their
receipt, and mentioning the partial distribution. For one
thing, a couple of days following their advent, there was
a doings at the school, - St. Matherw's colored school,
and two good youths, whose earning power has been slight
because of their attendance at school, had not unfrayed
shirts for the little program in which they were to appear.
I need not say how much these two items meant to them, giving
them great satisfaction, - not to mention considerable
pride, in thus being able to appear all stretched and on
an uncontested footed with some of the more fortunate students.
Tonight there is a graduation of a class of larger students,
as well as another one to be held a week hence. It will mean
so much to these youths to be thus equipped, and for the ensuing
year, when ever there is a call for "Sunday clothes," as they
call them here, they will have the assurance and constant
reminder of one who, without knowing them individually,
somehow as able to clothe the poor, and at the same time
make them happy. Thank you much on their and my part.

Thanks equally for the penciled report which meant
ever so much to me. Such confidence was an enormous boost
to me, and what with things going somewhat by sixes-and-
sevens at the time the report arrived, it did a double
service. The lady's health situation remains much the
same, although if anything slightly on the improved side.
Still in her room, and without having dressed as yet, she
is out of the bed, and spends much time reading these
days. Physically, I should say, she is almost back to
normal, but mentally she occasionally goes in to fits of
depression, - natural with reduction of the blood count, and
such times are difficult both for her and those who
try to cheer her up. Vaguely I sense a tendency on the part
of la Giffman toward laying a barrage in the direction of
Rabutin. It hasn't come off yet, - and might be halted
immediately if ever started, still, the sensation of the
possibility is unpleasant. Rabutin remains the only
one who can do much with the head of the set up, but
I am frankly amazed that this very fact has long before this
caused a racket to break out. But should such bridges
come into view, it will be sufficient time to cross them
when they are reached. (over)

202

936

The clipping covering "le vieux homme de la Riviere" knocked everyone for a loop. Coming at a time when the Legislature is meeting, the absence of a line is to be brought up for consideration, - surely that was a blow. Up to now the President of the Library Association hasn't been able to contact him, either by telephone or personal call at his hotel, nor have we heard anything from him at this place. It was interesting that on the day following the receipt of your clippings, a letter came from Anne Parish, likewise enclosing a ~~last~~ clipping similar to the ones you supplied. With her clipping was merely a card, saying to "The Madam," "Thought you would find this interesting." As you know, her late husband had been a great friend of the subject in question. It was interesting that her clipping, apparently taken from a suburban edition of the same paper, was not so long by a couple of paragraphs, so that your report was both more prompt and complete. A copy was immediately forwarded to Miss Silver. She is expected to make a round in these parts within a week or so, and then we shall see what we shall see regarding the intentions of the Legislature.

Concerning recent clippings covering the literary field, R. P. and I are much interested in the Doubleday, Doran negro book prize, and that of Houghton, Mifflin. As I recall, both are for \$2,500.00. We have already written for blanks, since we shall have volumes under both categories for the publishers anyway, we might as well submit them in passing, - just in case. I believe the Houghton, Mifflin is in a series, styled Life in America, or some such.

Should Mrs. Moore, responding to my request for her opinion as to what she would consider fair in the handling of the Natchez Scrapbook, relinquish her rights to that volume, we might sew the columns together, and submit that to Houghton, Mifflin. Should she not, we can easily submit the Old Louisiana Scrapbook. Save for re-writing that volume, and doing quite a bit of composing by way of introductions to chapters, and polishing off a lot, the thing is pretty well in hand. That is to say, we already have assembled more material that we shall probably be able to include in the publication. As we re-write, we shall also remove, and it may be that the publisher will also pare it down some even after that. But it is so much better to have an embarrassment of material rather than a paucity.

In its final shape up, it will probably stress these items:

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937

May 23rd, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service: -

Merely a line this morning, as I am pushed for time.

Do want to acknowledge receipt of joint report, - as addressed to the Madam and me, and it came to hand in yesterday's mail, - as did the two volumes, - General Butler, etc., both of which, - report and package, - delighted the Madam no end, - as it did me.

It is nice to think of C. and the twins as being so propitiously located for the summer. It is good to think of you and the girl friend as being in the neighborhood of the lake, for birthday and general outing.

A fine letter from Mr. John Martin, indicates that he has received his mother's civil war letters, addressed to her husband, General Martin of Montaigne, - and that he has transcribed them and is forwarding them. He has included the names of a flock of people in Natchez who appeared to frequent the society of Yankee officers altogether too much. In reproducing (interruption), I shall have to use a certain care in not offending the Martin family by putting the finger, through these communications, - on certain bags now living in Natchez, but a little later, and even at the moment, certain phraseologies can be employed that will tell all without saying much of anything regarding actual names. But aside from such approaches, the letters, I am sure, will prove wonderfully interesting, and it is so unusual to have letters from a General's wife in times of such stress, - I believe Gen. Martin was the only general which this region produced in the Civil War, - I believe their contents will have a wide interest.

The Madam continues to improve, as manifested by her continued and furthered interest in reading, and although she doesn't like to admit it, she is much better physically at the moment. She will eventually come around, although she may remain in her room for a few weeks yet, - but that is merely in line with her whim, - and eventually the horse will drink water after getting thirsty enough.

So interested in material you mentioned as having run across, - ant to skeap of it further, but must skip. I'll be back again shortly.....

888

938

May 30th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

My trouble is during these busy days that I write too many letters in my mind and then, when I find myself at this machine, forget what I have actually set down and what I haven't.

In yesterday's mail came a most excellent report, addressed primarily to Mr. Pipes and myself, and one which we both enjoyed thoroughly, with Mr. P. remarking that it was among the better letters he had ever had the privilege to read.

I am ashamed of myself for having failed to mention receipt of the newspaper articles about Old Man River. They certainly meant a great deal to all of us in many different respects, not only by way of gratitude for the clipping in providing us with them but also for the information the clippings themselves contained. From what they had to say, I gather the man in question is up and about, even though apparently not about much of a constructive nature. I immediately enclosed one to the President of the Library Commission who has been unable to establish contact either by mail, telephone or personal meeting for ever so long. Immediately I had a response from that place, expressing thanks for the information the Beebe item contained. It was good of you to send two copies, for both can be employed as part of a record that slowly, I am sorry to say, becomes less imposing.

Letters came through from Natchez yesterday, - a splendid sheaf of them, - from Mr. Martin. He had obtained the original letters which his mother had written from Montaigne to her husband, General Martin, during the occupation of Natchez by the Yankees in 1863 and subsequently. Imagine my delight when one of them began thus: "I acquaint you in detail with all that has happened here during the past several months since the arrival of the Yankees", etc., etc., with pages following that embraced all the details which had come to her attention, - and they were endless. I have not had a chance to run through either this letter or the others, but from a casual glance they are all of the highest order (over)

939

and detail not only the ransacking of Montaigne, but the doings of individual people of prominence in Natchez and their re-actions to the Yankees. Unquestionably these letters constitute the finest collection of the type ever run across. Comparatively few wives of Generals had the extraordinary mental capacity and strength that Mrs. Martin possessed, few women would have dared write as she did, - for fear of the letters being intercepted, and none that I know of were in such a remarkable situation as to be able to confide so many details to a husband far away in the opposing Army. I don't know yet how I shall use these letters. They would be a beacon of light in any volume in which they might be included, and a revelation as to the circumstances under which people of culture lived during a time that was so trying...

I cannot speak too highly of these papers, and were I associated at this moment, - before breakfast, with a parfait secretaire, I feel sure I would want to be spending the balance of the day digesting their contents, and figuring how they might be used to the greatest advantage.

Mr. Pipes and I have reached the stage wherein we find ourselves pulling out material from the mass we have collected, discovering that ours is an embarrassment of wealth. This is all to the good since it enables us to cull the contents over and retain what appears to us to be only the best. Mr. Pipes, for example, was able to discard a lot of stuff yesterday when he discovered the old 1896 pamphlet, written by dictation of "the man", who lived South of Alexandria, who dictate his life story to a school teacher, under the title: "The Man Who Sold His Wife". That is likely to make a striking chapter head, don't you think?

In yesterday's mail I sent a letter to La Moore, inquiring how she would like to divide our material, in order that something may be done with a part of it now. I explained to her that while she felt forced in December to make a terribly important decision without confiding in any one, - with a view to solving certain financial problems, so now I was forced to make use of some of the material which she had left unfinished, and that we must make some decision soon. I am not telling her, but my next letter to her will indicate that during her absence at least, the Old Natchez Scrapbook will be permitted to lapse, and that in its place will appear The Old Mississippi Scrapbook with Mr. Pipes' name substituted for hers in association with me.

940

And speaking of scrapbooks, reminds me that the Natchez Democrat, in characteristic fashion, recorded two different events in the Sunday paper the other day. One article was headlined: "Mrs. Robert Wood, President of the Natchez Garden Club, will inaugurate a series of broadcasts of the Old Natchez Scrapbook. The local scrapbook continues apace in Natchez, with the children of St. Joseph's school having accumulated some many tons of scrap during the past week, the children of so and so, - and so on". They, under the title of "Triumph Marks Local Scrapbook", drive, there was much to be said about the enormous tonnage of scrap acquired and how the labors of a local historian, in pursuance of this great accumulation of scrap, would have it broadcast over Station WMIS". The whole thing was a mare's nest and made no sense at all, but may have accomplished a lot by making people who recognized the error in set up talk and talk and talk.

In regard to the local health situation, the Madam improves steadily but not strikingly. Her mental view point is gay and her sense of humour returned. She remains on the second floor of the big house, in accordance with her own volition, in conformity with the orders from all doctors, save her son-in-law, and the latter's wife, who seem determined to get her down stairs. The stairs would be a tax on her, in my opinion, but comparatively slight, as contrasted with the hauling and pulling she would do once she set foot in the garden where most certainly she would do herself out on the first round without realizing how far she had gone.

Just as few friends of the lady can make a go of it here very long, so Mrs. Doty who has been with her since her return from the hospital is making plans to leave shortly, although no one knows it as yet, and you might skip reference to that fact. That evil bag who has robbed the lady of so many friendships is forever at work, and the departure of Madam Doty will mark but one more to a long, long list, - and some one else will come to be with the lady while she is convalescing and will stay about as long as all the preceding.

But there are pleasanter side to discuss, and as for myself, I am divorcing my mind from things which are beyond my scope. It is heartening to go ahead in the Old Louisiana Scrapbook, and it is astonishing the number of things we have had to discard, - for want of space, - which will be ready for inclusion on some other project when he get around to expanding some of the chapters of the present volume in to full blown books, - items such as the Erwin Diary, the Prudhomme diary, etc., etc.

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941

But I turn this page merely to break off. And
to hundred other things I wanted to say at this moment, but
I must let them slide for the moment.

For the past night or two, I have been having
a couple of eerie thoughts charging around in my mind.
I haven't made much sense out of them as yet, but
I feel there is some sort of a relationship to them
which I have not correlated as yet. One has to do
with Miss Myra's Devereux, one has to do with Rosenwald
and one has to do with the negro. Out of such a curious
association, I think I may end up by asking Miss Myra
to establish Devereux in whole or in part, - as a
place where Rosenwald may erect a library exclusively for
negro material. There are a lot of records floating
about that should be housed permanently on that subject,
and as Devereux almost adjoins the Forks of the Road,
where the ante bellum slave center was located, - with
the old buildings still there, and with Devereux running
straight across the "V" formed by the road to Washington,
Miss, on which Devereux faces, - and the Liberty Road, to
Windy Hill, adjoining Montaigne and Oakland - it makes
an ideal spot for such a project. I have lately written
Mrs. Haygood of the foundation to pass by this way when
she comes South. I guess I have yet started on old
Rosenwald. I feel sure that Miss Myra would be sympathetic,
and so thoughts course through my brain. If I can make
any sense out of them, - that will be fine, and if I can't
it will have been a pleasure to have turned them over as
a possibility. But I must skip for the moment.....

842

942

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I enclose letter which I thought might interest you,
although of no importance.

Several times yesterday our joint labors were interrupted
by Mr. P., who broke into a line of thought with some observa-
tion such as this:

"You know that sure was a grand letter we had from
our favorite Clipper. Somehow it showed a heart and an
understanding that I don't recall having run up against in
letters from other directions."

I appreciated his observations, and replied that I
should write a line to the Clipping Service, and report that
he had expressed himself thus:

"Kind hearts are more than coronets and simple faith than
Saxon blood".

I can't think why I haven't thought to quote from the
same line many a time before, - the first half is so true,
while the last half is so pat.

And speaking of Pat, he returns to Melrose from
his school in Columbia, Tennessee today. His father, Joe
Henry, is here, passing through Louisiana, as between
his old military post in Florida to his new one in
California.

Another letter came in yesterday's mail from Alice
Walworth's sister, wife of a doctor, living in Baton Rouge.
When she can find it, she wants me to borrow her grandfather's
Diary. He was old Samuel Adolph Cartwright, friend of Dr.
Mercer, and the only physician ever to occupy the chair of
negro diseases at Tulane University, - that was in ante
bellum times. She also remarks upon a lot of letters of
Jefferson Davis to Dr. Cartwright, etc., which she wants
to share with me, when I run down to Baton Rouge. I do hope
I can take time out to go to see her, if and when Mr. P.
and I get a chance to run down there to hob-knob with Adam
Ulver soon.

(over)

943

I think I have mentioned that Alice and her sister are also granddaughters of an Gordon, planter, of Louisiana, whose wife was Mrs. Audubon's sister, and that explains why Alice and her sister have so many original Audubon's, - which have never been reproduced. I have never met Mary, but understand she is a grand person, - as would be supposed by her kind letter.

I would write more but am pressed for time at the moment. I'd want to say Howdy, however, and so just ripped this off regardless.

Cannot refrain from again mentioning the Martin letters, a few of which I have yet to explore, having read but 4 or 5, - with as many left to run through. They are really the finest thing of their type ever seen either by Aunt Cammie or by myself. I am writing questions, - one each, - on the top of a sheet, and sending them along to Mr. Martin, with the request that he answer them all, - and endlessly, and what with such data, the letters might almost justify a little volume by themselves. Only one thing would hold up publication. The letters name names of those in Natchez who flopped over to the Yankee cause as soon as Natchez was occupied. Were the names to be included in such a publication the whole town would rock, but that might be good publicity, for earthquakes occur but seldom in Natchez, - the last one of a geographic nature being in 1811. But I must say there have been a couple of social ones since that somewhat remote date. Must skip.....

944

June 3rd, 1944.

Report to Clipping Service:

Things in this neighborhood turn much as usual. The Madam continues to improve slowly, maintaining for the most part her gains in mental interest, although she remains on the second floor of the big house, which is all to the good.

In yesterday's mail came a report from John Martin, which promises to cover a lot of things to renew the Madam's interest in things. Pursuant or in consequence to ground work laid during my trip to Natchez, following the visit of Roane and Alice to Helrose, net results were noted which pleased me much.

Miss Charlie Compton, an old resident of Natchez, a Vassar graduate, a woman of exceeding culture and odd mental twists, - one of which included a mania to lift everything that wasn't nailed down, - and some things that were, died. Her heir was a sister who lives in Tennessee. While in Natchez during the post Roane visit, I dictated a letter to Mr. Martin, addressed to Miss Charlie's heir. Years ago Mr. Martin had known the heir, and so together, - with two paragraphs by me and a personal one by him, we prided the well. Mrs. Newell, the heir, came to Natchez a couple of weeks ago. Yesterday a letter from Mr. Martin indicated success in our efforts to obtain something from Miss Charlie's plunder during the past 50 years.

For one thing, Mrs. Newell gave Mr. Martin and me a 13 volume diary, bound in leather. Mr. Martin had not had time to explore its contents when he reported. I suppose it to be one kept by some Adams County aristocrat in ante bellum times. Following the civil war, people generally did not go in for full leather bindings. Aunt Cammie will pass out when she hears of that item.

Then there are several scrapbooks, containing clippings of all sorts, including poetry, etc. One of these is the property of Amelia Routh of the powerful Routh family, - one time owners of Dunleith, Kenilworth, Longwood, etc. Another scrapbook bears the name of Moise, who was a popular portrait painter in old Natchez, I believe. I need not tell you what kind of a fit these two items will

945

result when the Madam hears of these. Then there is the Geographic Report with Historical introduction, 1854, by B. L. C. Wailles. An 1814 volume of the laws of Mississippi enacted by the Legislature in that year, - then sitting in Washington, Miss. Another great rarity, I believe, is the roll of people in Natchez and Adams County to headed out for the Civil War in 1861. I am not sure, of hand, but I believe this to be an exceedingly rare, if not altogether unique item. It may provide a small volume to be brought out on that subject alone. Thousands of descendants, I believe, have wondered about this list, and plenty of them would like to have such a printed list. That is something to be considered.

I enumerate these items from memory, as the list was read to me hurriedly yesterday. I might also add that there are the 1903 to 1905 issues of The Democrat (Natchez).

It was during those years that Miss Charlie was writing the social news for The Democrat. She was riotous in her reporting, and several events in those years, - including the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Manchester to Natchez, which had amazing Gay 90 wries ups which will be marvelous for one purpose or another. There are also the June to September issues of the tri-weekly Democrat for the year 1868. This will be exceedingly valuable, too, in as much as it will give a remarkable picture of Natchez under Reconstruction and carpet bag rule. Reconstruction in Mississippi lasted approximately from 1865 to about 1873 - or possibly 1876, so an 1868 issue of the paper should be entirely significant of those days when negro police patrolled the town and negro postmasters, mayors and city officials labored mis-guidedly for unscrupulous white trash.

There are other items in the collection, but these are all I can recall at the moment, and I have run the risk of enumerating some of them in order that you may be informed as to how things turn.

I may and I may not tell the Madam of this haul. I am afraid if I do, she will worry me endlessly about having the whole things shipped here without delay, and possibly I might do better to bring back an item at a time whenever I visit Natchez, so that she may have a prolonged inning of entertainment, - and in successive waves.

I must write Mr. Martin this morning and congratulate him upon the success which has attended his efforts in securing this material. I might add that he also reported in his letter that Mrs. Newell had assured him that should she run across other material which she believed might interest us, she would telephone him. May his telephone jingle merrily, although the present "haul" is sufficient for me to express the greatest satisfaction.

946

Mr. Pipes and I continue our labors. The Old Louisiana Scrapbook is about done, although there are quite a lot of odds and ends to be worked over before "Finis" may finally be written. It is not shaping up exactly as we had originally supposed it would. In some respects it is a lot better than I had pictured it might be. In other respects it might be a little better, and I am not sure that it is sufficiently well balanced in breadth of appeal to enjoy a maximum of popularity, - although it may be, and after we have run over it for the last time, we can eventually put in a couple of items which may jack up any sagging places.

I must tell you quite frankly that Mr. Pipes has slaved nobly over this volume, and I feel a little embarrassed that I have not done more. But I try to content myself with the feeling that possibly before Mr. Pipes arrived, I had accumulated a few things which have saved time in the final lap of the race, so perhaps I shouldn't feel too contrite.

There isn't much in this report that will bear reference to, I'm afraid. I shall decide within the next few days as to whether I shall tell the Madam regarding the treasure which has come to hand after careful preparation in Natchez. In the mean time, I feel doubly tickled that I have some one to chat with about all this stuff, and it is a great source of pleasure to take a peek down the years and to contemplate some unforeseen opportunity when a parfait secretaire can romp through some of this material with me.....

347

June 5th, 1944.

Memorandum for Clipping Service:

Just a line to keep you advised how things turn.

I have shown the list of item Mr. Martin sent, - covering scrapbooks, diaries, etc., to the Madam. She naturally is enchanted.

Another item, - but this is merely for your information at the moment, and you might skip reference to it until I refer to it later: -

Harcourt Brace turned down the manuscript of The Fabulous 52.

Both Mr. Pipes and I were astonished. His short story is so wonderful, and, I must confess in all modesty, my idea of the set up, I thought, was good. But turn it down they did.

I accordingly wrote your friend Mr. Frese, and Mr. Pipes enclosed the manuscript for his consideration. In Saturday's mail came back a dual response, - one to Mr. Pipes and one to me. Mine was an expression of thanks. His was advise, saying that the manuscript had been turned over immediately to the printers to determine the manufacturing costs, and that a letter would follow immediately upon receipt of that information. The letter also stated that Hastings House was delighted with the item. I reckon some time later this week a further letter will come through, indicating costs involved in the printing of the volume, with some idea as to the price at which the item can be turned out, possible royalties available, etc.

All that is very heartening, of course. Mr. Pipes and I will get a double kickout of the whole business, should The Fabulous 52 turn out to be a good seller, not only for benefits that might accrue, but also because it might turn out to be a mighty rebuke to Harcourt.

Until I have advised further on this point, however, you might skip any reference to it.

(over)

948

Yesterday the Madam was shown the manuscript of the Old Louisiana Scrapbook. She expressed unalloyed enthusiasm. There is still considerable work to be done in finishing the thing off in the neighborhood of its roughened corners, but that work is going along a pace. Mr. Pipes is working very hard on it, and I am doing what I can, although I am not contributing much to this part of the job.

I suppose that this job of re-writing will probably be concluded before the end of the month, and then I think we shall turn it over to Mr. Martin for a final transcription. As I view its launching at this somewhat premature date, it appears to me that The Fabulous 52, - assuming production is possible in view of current shortages, might be brought out about the 1st of September. It usually takes about 3 months for an average book in normal times to fall off the presses after the thing is put in production. With "52" but 59 pages or less, I should imagine the printing job should be much shorter, - hence the possible September date.

I am under the impression that by October 1st, the item should begin to have some publicity, for I think it will enjoy a considerable popularity. About the middle of August, we should have been able to submit the Old Louisiana Scrapbook, so that its publication, - if it can go into production now, ought to (interruption, - the thing ought to make its appearance about the last of October. This would give it a little space on the pre-Christmas stands, and at about the time it appears, Mr. Pipes' "52" should be sufficiently mentioned as to direct attention to his part in the Scrapbook. And so, assuming that things turn in some such manner, the sale of the Scrapbook outside Louisiana, ought to hinge in part on the popularity of 52, and once the thing is on the market in the Gulf area, I believe its sales will immediately begin to operate, - never with any great rush, I presume, but constant and over a period of years. So be it, and I already begin turning in my mind how I may further both items.

Mr. Pipes doesn't much like speaking, but I don't mind, and I think we shall arrange for a few lectures on the South's new-born poet, and of course I can beat the drum with laudations beyond anything he would do or would think of doing in his own behalf. Altogether the thing might turn out very nicely for all concerned.

I suppose I shall have a letter from Mrs. Moore this week. I know that she probably fainted when she received my last letter to her, for it is my frank opinion that never before did it occur to her how shocking her sudden departure for the wars must have been to me.

Well, Mary Frances sat and watched Clemence stir up a Primitif the other day, and asking for a sheet of black paper and some paint, stirred up a picture for herself. The result was entirely beyond belief. Here is a picture which is so astonishingly Matisse that it makes no sense whatsoever. It is the portrait of a little girl, - full face, - which is rather difficult at best, with a treatment of the features which just can't be given credence. I feel assured that it is just one of those curious things that happen once in a life time, and I doubt very much if Mary Frances will ever hit off anything again of the slightest interest, but this one time she certainly hit the bull's eye. Carefully done, the picture would have little interest to anyone, I reckon, and especially as no one would believe that it is the work of an 11 year old child. Clemence never paints people full face, - she says that "it llok like I can't do folks coming at me", - but here this child, sitting along side, takes brush in hand, strikes off her first picture, and turns out something by nature and feeling quite at variance with Clemence and in design and treatment so much like a much vaunted French Impressionist that it is arresting. I apologize for taking up all your time with this details, and I am afraid I shall never be able to report a second masterpiece from the same brush, but this is so extraordinary, and since you will one day have an opportunity to run through some of these items, and I couldn't restrain myself from speaking of them at this time.

Only Mr. Pipes and I know of this twist in the arts. Since we feel that these items are going to be of considerable interest sooner or later, we collect a canvass or two every 5 or 6 days, and then it is that we give Clemence some money. Old Rosenwald doesn't know how much he is helping out the colored section by the grant he made to Mr. Pipes.

We hear nothing, of course, from the Crescent City, and in a way, I trust it may continue thus. I suppose the Madam may be correct in stating that in her opinion we shall not see him again in these parts. Frankly I have no means of knowing, but I have lots of ability to hope, in a way, that she is right. From day to day we expect the Library representative to pass by here, but as that unit never hears anything from him, I reckon we shall learn little from that source.

I think of nothing else at the moment that I can squeeze into the little space left, save to say that the Madam's health improves steadily and if she continues to go slow, she will make it. I think it was sweet to mention the vitamins but these are being withheld for the moment....

950

The Madam has so often remarked since that time that one never can fathom how a seeming disaster can turn about in such a manner as to prove itself a blessing. If Mrs. Moore had not gone to the Army, I never would have enlisted Mr. Martin's assistance, and without it, I would not have gained so much as I most certainly am grateful for, - thanks to that contact. Then too the association with Mr. Pipes would never have developed either, and assuming that both are advantageous, much more appears to be to my advantage without lady Moore than with her. She certainly has always been motivated by the kindest of intentions toward me, and I shall always be enormously indebted to her for a thousand and one thoughtful things she has done in my behalf, but since she did terminate the association, - possibly temporarily, possibly for good, I do not feel the loss so much and in the end I presume the succeeding 6 months have not turned out less profitably, - in hopes, at least, - than had the former relationship continued.

I would speak to you confidentially of another matter. Mr. Pipes and I continue to "nurse" Clemence along. Mr. Pipes is spending quite a bit of money for canvas, paints, drawing materials, etc., and now and then I toss in a little silver in Clemence's direction. The result of our cultivation is that she is turning out a flock of paintings. They are primitives, - Cane River Primitives, but withal quite charming, and many of them distinctly Rousseau in feeling. Aside from the remarkable quality they possess, considering the fact that Clemence has never seen any pictures, and just "knocks" them off out of a clear sky, they at the same time possess a quality which may make them of interest for illustrations in a child's book.

There are at Melrose a staggering assortment of negro short stories, negro folk tales, etc., which, if I might express it so, found their inception from 4 or 5 years of soundings by le vieux de la riviere. No one can tell if these items will ever be considered by the one under whose supervision they were collected. Save in his mind, no one knows of them, save us. From this mass, - when we have time, - I believe a flock of stories may be extracted, with the result that some fine books, - particularly children's books, might be compiled, - and that, of course, is where Clemence comes in, for her illustrations would be the perfect medium for this type of thing.

Another point which is not important, but quite interesting. Clemence, - you remember, the former landress here, has brought up an 11 year old girl, - the latter's mother having died when she was a wee child. This child is called Mary Frances LeCour. (It is either LeCour or LaCour, - the white being spelled one way and the colored the other), - but that of course doesn't matter.

951

June 5th at Melrose.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

About dawn this morning, I wrote one Memorandum, and here goes another in the same morning, although it is now something after ten.

There is nothing of importance to say except that I am grateful to the postman and all for the nice mail which arrived today.

The clippings appear to be most interesting, and we have but glanced at the headings, laying them aside until this evening, when we shall take them up individually, and insert them in appropriate place in the negro scrapbook.

And klop! Just as I wrote that line, an idea struck me. Why shouldn't we do a Negro Scrapbook. Thanks millions for that idea. I knew I would have pleasure in filing this report. Thanks to you, it has given me a double dividend.

I have a flock of pictures, - interior of slave ships and heaven knows what all. With the rising tide of color about to burst some economic and social dams, I reckon such a book might be timely. Perhaps we could persuade old Rosenwald to do something about the printing. Swell idea. Thank you much. Honestly, I must confess I believe someone ought to examine my head for thinking along on paper and not writing a letter.

Well, Mr. Pipes and I were both touched by your reference to Ziba. Your expression was so sweet. I'll tell you something about one of the items in Ziba. I reckon Mr. Pipes might not mind if I told it, although I think he has never confided it to any one but me, so you might skip reference to it. I do want to tell you, however, since I think it might slightly increase your interest. I believe there is one poem in the volume, - the poem, like the title of the book, being ZIBA. Well, Mr. P. has confided to me that that poem was written in a most curious fashion. It has long been his habit to keep pencil handy on a night table, and should an idea occur during the night, he would jot it down. In the case of Ziba, he awoke one night to jot down an idea, and before he realized it, the poem was just flowing along from the end of his pencil without him seemingly to have much to do about the whole thing. The

122

952

more the pencil continued to write, the more amazed he became, so easily did the thing take shape and form without any effort on the part of his brain. I suppose the piece had been stewing subconsciously in his mind for ever so long and that when the moment struck, all he had to do was just to let the whole thing go. I don't know if he would feel that he would like the world to know this or not, but I confided it to you, thinking that it might lend something to the reading of the piece. As yet, I have heard but scant lines from the book. I don't want him to concern himself with it at the moment, realizing that his mind is full of Old Louisiana Scrapbook. When Miss Mahlers was here, she read a little to me from the first part of the poem, Ziba, and I thought it grand. Eventually, we shall all have to have a literary evening, when I can get brushed up on some of that stuff. I had even written some of it.

Your reference to the little dog made me sympathize with you. At one time we had 10 or 15 of them around here, but what with gifts and deaths, we are now without any of the little baloneys. I noticed one thing in particular about those we had about this place. In nearly every littler f of the breed, all are of a red-brown hue, save one which is all black. I am not certain if your dog is of the red coloring of the black. I hope, however, that it may be red, for the black ones have this peculiarity, - they almost invariably devote or attach themselves to one person exclusively. Usually they are inordinately sensitive and are accordingly a little more frail than the red skins. Should your little girl friend chance to be the object of this little animal's affection, you may be quite sure that no one else will ever enjoy such an honor. There was a female one in the Melrose crowd, - the black ones usually are females, who for 8 years barked incessantly if anyone save its object of affection came within a mile of the place. It seems strange that these black numbers never will regard anyone but the object, - and only one object, of their affections, and will cling to the chosen one like a shadow. Personally I like the personality of the red ones rather better, although, were I the favorite of one of the black ones, - which I never have been, I suppose I would treasure his attention the more. Early I had to make up my mind if I would cherish Old Grandpa or a dachhund, and since Grandpa fell heir to my companionship, the baloneys were ruled out of my domain, although the red ones frolic around the big house were always friendly enough.

953

In the same mail with your report arrived also the Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin, together with the other two items included in the same shipment. It goes without saying that the Madam was enchanted to receive the latter, - that is to say, the package, and after running through her mail, reclined on her sofa and started in on the Key, as I withdrew, licking her chops at the thought of the pleasures ahead of her. Up to the moment I haven't had a chance to do more than glance through the other two items, but I am enchanted to note that you have done some noble underlining which will be of the greatest assistance to us, as we carry on our explorations far afield with our eye on a Charleston Scrapbook.

Also in this morning's mail came a letter from Mrs. Edwin Whitaker, - Alice Walworth's sister, who lives in Baton Rouge. Hearing that we might be in Baton Rouge to see Miss Culver one day, she wrote, asking us to come and be her guest, although neither Mr. Pipes and I have ever met her. I thought it quite nice of her, and should we be so fortunate as to catch a ride in that direction, we shall be delighted to accept. Her collection of ante bellum material must be quite interesting, and as none of it has ever been used, we may find quite some purpose in combining the business of collecting with the pleasure of a new contact.

Mut skip along for now. Curious, filing two reports under the same date line, but hope you aren't too burdened withal.....

228

954

June 5th, at Melrose. 1944

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

If I remember correctly, it was the Doge of Genoa at the head of his mission at Versailles at the time of the 14th Louis who said, in response to an inquiry as to what astonished him most in the marvels of that place: "To find myself here".

I experience something of the same sensation at the moment, for according to my memory, this is the first time I have ever written three letters in the same day to the same service.

I have already bored you with a long letter, written at dawn, and another at dinner time. And here I am again at supper time hammering away at the same keyboard and taking up more of your time.

Somehow I feel inordinately nervous, - perhaps I should say tired, what with some work I have done today and the high humidity. I guess I sense something astir abroad, too, for I cannot help feeling that if there is to be a "D" day, the impending night will bring it forth. The President is scheduled to speak shortly. Perhaps he will have something to say on that point, perhaps not. And perhaps there really are no plans for an invasion, but so ehow all day I have instinctly felt that before another dawn, gigantic forces will be on the move. Miss Adele, a Cane River mulatto, cuts cards professionally to explore secrets otherwise hidden from average people. I must borrow her deck of cards and discover for myself if I am sensing things without their aid.

The primary reason for this note, however, is to inquire if you think a parfait secretaire might eventually pass by this neighborhood. Since my noon letter to you, I have chatted with Mr. Pipes, and conversation circled about such a possibility, and little exploratory trips were made into the realm of possibility, should circumstances throw such a person of intelligence as la secretaire is known to be, should a voyage along La Cote Joyeuse be made.

For ever so long I have contemplated the enormous amount of material that is stored on the shelves of this place. Both Mr. P. and I can only wonder why le vieux de la riviere and countless other people never tried to extract the accumulation held within the pages of so many books and set the pieces to work at paying dividends. I am not sure that any one is artist enough to convert the good paragraphs and sections into such a mixture as to produce a demand

955

for the stuff, but it seems to me that with some imagination, the trick could be turned. In other words, there are an awful lot of cows to be milked in this dairy. There may be a good market for the cream, if it is properly presented, and would it be wise to suggest someone who knows what we are driving at to hazard a vacation in this direction to survey the possibility.

Strangely enough, but Mr. P. somehow sense that in all his acquaintances, he knows of but one who would be possessed of such a sense as would understand what he and I are talking about. He knows not the person personally, but has heard enough, and has witnessed enough reports from that direction to form an adequate opinion.

Should you hear from Lydie Lee, and the latter should foresee the possibility of passing a prolonged vacation in these regions, we should be glad to have particulars covering the same.

In the meantime, - since my letter, - the 2nd written today, - we have considered the Scrapbook on Slavery. That was born in a phrase earlier in my report. Mr. P. then recalled a clipping from our favorite clipper covering a prize of \$2,500.00 offered by Doubleday on a negro book of any kind. The Negro Scrapbook could be made quite interesting, I believe, the more I contemplate the matter. I should like to find a flock of pictures on that score, - with rare items, more or less tracing the negro from the first slaver down to the present, - pictorially. I should like to find some horribly graphic pictures, - dogs chasing runaway slaves, etc. I suppose some of the early Frank Leslie magazines, - do you recall having ever seen some of those, might have such pictures in them. I don't know if Baton Rouge or New Orleans has any of these, but I shall look for them when chance presents itself, for there might be some abolition stuff in them. I might also find some old colonial French prints of the negro, too, that would be graphic if not gorey.

But these and a hundred other things I shall write about at another sitting. It is getting toward the hour for the Presidential broadcast and I must fold up. Please forgive the inordinate number of letters struck off today. I promise it shall not happen again soon.....

956

Spanish
Document
at Natchez

Memorandum to Clipping Service:
After filing three reports in a single day last week, I thought I might perhaps best demonstrate some regard for that Service by giving a bit of respite. We were delighted to have your letter, covering the status of the dachhund and the unfortunate observation made regarding the time devoted to personal mail. Isn't it a shame that people must tear up perfectly harmonious relations but a single observation, such as in the present instance.

In times past I have thought that these little remarks frequently stem, not from a point chosen to hit upon, but rather are mere expressions of annoyance which chance to explode at some unpredictable moment, and that what ever may have chance to be the subject to the fore at the moment the explosion was due, it just happened that one thing or another, possibly something quite close to one's heart, should be the chance victim of the remark or observation. But what is more lamentable than the observation, I think, is the fact that never again, - no matter how perfectly the state of mind may be restored on the part of the speaker, there will always be just the slightest flaw in the hitherto perfect surface of the friendship which on years, - if ever, are capable of removing from the mind of the person who has been the object of the remarks. The Madam continues to improve slowly, both physically and in spirits, - with occasional lapses into gloom in the later pracket.

As I am pressed for time, I can mention but one item more before sending this along. A letter from Mr. Martin indicates that he has received from a cousin out West somewhere a copy of the Diary of Dr. Benjamin Chase. Dr. Chase, you may recall, was mentioned vaguely, in B. L. C. Waller's notes, - as covered by Sydnor, - but merely mentioned in passing, as I recall.

Dr. Chase's country home was Mantua, of which I may have spoken before. It was some 12 miles down the Kingston Road, below, - to the South of Watchex. Mantua was modest but elegant, built on lines not unlike Cheshire. Its garden was remarkable, - 370 acres, including park & gardens, artificial lake, deer park, etc. Its brick wall was 4 feet high with a 10 foot paling in wood above that. Only sections of the old brick wall remain, and Mantua, the house, was taken down a year or two ago. I think I have spoken to you regarding its one time museum on the top floor, etc.

Well, according to Mr. Martin, the Diary appears to be marvelously interesting, and he being transcript of it at once. For myself, I have asked him to ^{make} put parentheses all along in the transcription, indicating the identity of the people and particulars regarding places and episodes that may be familiar to Mr. Martin. All of this will greatly enhance the value of the book ^{and} of course. From what Mr. Martin has to say about it, it would appear that the two volumes are so fascinating that they would afford great entertainment to anyone. Frankly, I am hoping that with the transcription completed, together with Mr. Martin's notes, I can enlist Mr. Pipes to join with me in bringing out the thing as a book in itself.

Of, yes, I must tell you that Miss Calver dropped by on Tuesday. She reports le vieux de la riviere as much concerned with death and generally in a pitiable condition. At the same time she called, another old friend of L.'s came, reporting that she had just returned from a 3 day visit in the Crescent City, during which three days they had seen him during prolonged sittings, and that he is precisely as always, in good health, save for lots of drinking, and happy as a clam, vigorous enough to be rewriting a novel, etc., etc. It appears that he has been playing tricks on Miss Calver. He hasn't written a line for her, either by way of letter or anything on Louisiana. That's why he plays sick, I suppose. In any event, the last State check goes forward this coming month, and then we shall see what we shall see. Simply must skip....more shortly.

As I am pressed for time, I can mention but one item more before sending this along. A letter from Mr. Martin indicates that he has received from a cousin two "out set" swivels - one .38 Smith & Wesson Remington-Union Model No. 700, and another .38 Smith & Wesson Remington-Union Model No. 700. The latter was mentioned in your letter as being covered by the patent.

June 20th at Melrose.

will hold much for your problem child, although you will
no doubt be surprised when he manifests no more interest
in the out. I shall remain within the house, if he is
permitted to. One or two of the pack we had here used to
remain forever on the gallery, just as close to a door as he
could get, and would have been in the house all the
time were not the screen doors there to warn him off.
Memoandum For Clinching Service

Memorandum For Clipping Service:

Way, way behind on my correspondence, yet grateful for the never failing reports that have come through during the past week. I have received tidings of little more at present.

Yesterday came the report covering the schedule in regard to the difficulty of tearing one's self away from the present set up, and we understand perfectly. In suggesting a round to these parts, we did so more by way of expressing a wish and anticipating a reality, and particularly with the idea of stressing our appreciation for the great worth of la parfaite secretaire. Patience is something to be nurtured and so strange are the twists of Fate that with an aspiration in one's heart, there is always the possibility of realization in the offing, especially if one keeps steadfastly fixed in thought on things to be desired.

A note from Harnett Kane in yesterday's mail, requesting the doors be opened for him to make a three or four day visit sometime this month. The Madam turned it over to me for answer and for determining the date. I haven't made up my mind as to when, but shall spread out the mat shortly.

Deep Delat Country is the title of his forthcoming book, now on its way to the publishers and scheduled to appear in October. Mr. Pipes and I think the last word a little out of joint, or at least lacking in imaginative quality. "Deep Delat Land" would even be better, although Deep Delata Destiny, or Design for Deep Delta or some such might do more to arrest one's thought, I should think. But after all, Mr. Kane, having already twice proved that he knows what he is doing, scarcely needs opinions from any one, and I have no doubt that his current opus will be, on the same level as the rest of his things.

It is interesting to hear how good your little Waldo is. The pattern is so similar to other cases I have known with this particular breed that it is surprisingly identical. Somehow by their very make up, - with body too long for their legs, they are objects of pity from the start, and as one grows fonder and fonder of them, they somehow take on all the attributes of something almost human, and are certainly much more appealing than a blood hound or a Great Dane. I presume the country

959

will hold much for your problem child, although you will no doubt be surprised when he manifest no more interest in the out. of doors than to remain within the house, if he is permitted to. One or two of the pack we had here used to remain forever on the gallery, just as close to a door as he could squeeze, and would have been in the house all the time were not the screen door there to ward him off.

They used to start up a rabbit now and then in the iris garden and chase the thing through the bamboo hedges and eventually end up under this house. Their legs were always too short for them to ever catch up with a rabbit, however, and I suppose they may have been called Daxhunds because the object of their flights into sport must of necessity simulate a fold up, if ever they were to catch up with it.

There were so many things I wanted to cover in this note, but I am in something of a tempest, what with half a dozen people working about this place, preparing to have the house jacked up or some such, and I can't remember if I have told you a lot of the things I have in mind or not.

Did I mention the fact that the Madam's eldest son was here from Wednesday through Friday, - and being just back from a couple of quick trips to Europe, conversation with him was exceptionally interesting. He arrived here about 4 on Wednesday, and by 9 o'clock the big old hay barn, adjoining the gardens to the east, and not too far from several units in the gardens themselves, burned to the ground. It was a clear, hot night without any breeze, and from 9 until mid-night the heat was intense. Embers dropped on the loom building and one or two others, but were quickly put out, and so nothing but the big barn burned, - which is much to be thankful for.

The Dormons were here on the following day, and I saw but little of them. Caroline has a sore foot, having stepped on a red hot nail that was in a burning ember that fell from an open fire in the fireplace at Briarwood. What she was doing, prowling around in her bare feet under such circumstances, I know not. But then, as you know, the Dormons are curious, and this is but a single example.

A million things await me, and I must fold for the moment, but will be back again on the morrow. Is it better for mail to come through if mailed here on a Friday or some such, and do they slide in easier if not sent by air.....

...I presume the country
of something almost human, and are certainly much more appealing
longer and tender and kinder and more human than the attitudes
they are objects of pity from the start, and as one grows
sworn and as one grows

960

old hos. newspaper
Arist 1827-28

Jallon

June 22nd 1944

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Twenty five times during the past twenty four hours have I written mental letters, expressing the same thought in a thousand different ways, and now that I am at the keyboard I do not seem to have any facility to express myself. Sufficient perhaps it may be to say that lean days do not exist when one senses how much it means to have a single sympathetic soul, anticipating all and at the same time keeping a lubricant available until such a time as the literary drill brings up a gusher. More would I say, but cannot. Perhaps my thoughts are sensed, even though not expressed.

I am under the impression Mr. Pipes may have written you on his own account relative to a paragraph he found in one of the former columns, - something which delighted him enormously, and which he wanted to speak of directly to you. At the time, he was just issuing from a somewhat pre-occupied state, - I almost said a depressed state, - and because of the pleasure which bought him out of it, I hadn't the courage to reduce his enthusiasm over a coincidence concerning the name of a certain ship by telling him that it was something conceived rather than an actuality. And so, if he does write, and you feel inclined to respond, you might give the impression that you were as astonished as he and that you had not had any one direct your attention to that paragraph concerning the trans Atlantic clipper before.

Although we haven't shown it to the Madam as yet, we have both been busy as bees turning through the 1827 - 1828 copy of the weekly newspaper ARIEL, which Mr. Martin sent us from Miss Charlie's collection. Her sister, in settling the estate, gave us many things, but the ARIEL is a loan, for she feels that later she may have an opportunity to sell this item. It is really worth much, - covering such a long period, - and such a rare one. For instance, we found what long I have scatched for, - a contemporary account of the Prince of Gallon, - Col. Foster's Slave Prince, - an account printed just after the Prince had left Natchez. Several details are included which throw additional light on the subject, and one or two errors are to be noted, - but unimportant ones, - such as attributing Prince Master to Col. James Foster instead of Thomas Foster, who had died ten years before Prince was actually freed and set adrift.

961

It is interesting, too, that there are a number of Louisiana plantations described for sale in these issues, - the properties of Joseph Erwin, the Madam's grandfather's father. This was in 1827 and 1828 when he had somewhat over expanded, and he was attempting to put his large holdings back in balance. He died in 1829, by tipping over into a water jar at the end of the gallery and drowning. Accordingly his wife, born Lavinia Thompson, who according to contemporary reports "is said to be a remarkable woman, being able to read and write", settled up the estate to a large extent, and although it ended up by not being the third largest fortune in Louisiana, it came out quite ample. Eventually we shall transcribe some of these items and give them to the Madam, for it will entertain her when things grow dull, - and besides, if we let her know the book was here now she would be itching to get into it.

We assemble material on the Old Mississippi Scrapbook, and without touching anything on subjects covered by Mrs. Moore and me, there will be lots of things to fill up a good sized book. There will be plenty of "hatchet" stuff in it but quite a bit of other localities, too, and I feel sure it will round itself out as satisfactorily as the Old Louisiana Scrapbook did.

There are other points I would cover at this sitting, but I shall have to let them go for the moment. I would say that although the weather continues hot and humid, there are cool elements at sundown, and pleasant thoughts that go with them. At the moment I have a couple of little problems of policy to settle but these are perfunctorily taken care of with the moral backing which yesterday's postman assisted in so nobly. "One I would say but no more could I feel...."

Give the impression that you were as astonished as he and that you had not had any direct attention to that paragraph concerning the transatlantic shipper.

Although we haven't shown it to the Madam as yet, we have been busy as bees turning through the 1827 - 1828 copy of the weekly newspaper ARRIER, which Mr. Martin sent us from Charles' collection. Her sister, in settling the estate, gave us many things, but the ARRIER is a loan, for she feels that later she may have an opportunity to sell this item. It is really worth much, - covering such a long period, - and such a rare one. In fact, we found what long I have searched for, - a contemporary account of the Prince of Wales, - Col. Foster's "Lave Prince" - an account printed after the Prince had left L'Angeles, - details are included which throw additional light on the subject, and one two errors are to be noted, - but unimportant ones, - as attributing Prince Master to Col. James Foster instead of Thomas Foster, who had ten years before Prince was actually killed and set adrift.

962

June 23rd at Melrose.

The Madam was enchanted with her note, as of last Sunday, and has suggested a memorandum be filed accordingly. Referring to the Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin, she says it was worth five dollars just to read about the Brazeals (sorry about the spelling). They have lived in this area for ever so long, have always been rather pretentious, and sometimes not too ethical; it is surmised. There was some mix up at one time about the estate of Marco, and something about Overton, - a name you may recall as figuring in the U. S. Senate. I don't recall the details, but a lot of people didn't like all the side lights that resulted from a curious and wholly legal combination which was a little unpleasant in some aspects.

I am delighted to have this particular reference from the pen of Madam Stowe, and I think Mr. Pipes and I can use it to advantage in the Old Mississippi Scrapbook, on which we are hard at work.

Do you remember la belle Irma Somperysac-Willard? She passed by yesterday with her 6 foot son. She is spending a week with her sister in Natchitoches. She has been working in Washington, keeping her New York apartment, but threatens to pass by here this fall for a little while. I don't believe it. She came through New Orleans, stopped at the St. Charles, and at mid-night, - she's inclined to be dizzy, - telephoned le vieux de la riviere, and had a delightful sitting with him. She claims he is as gay as ever, read very excellent portions from a book he is writing, called Rainy Mardi Gras, and seemed to be his usual self. She did say he looked terribly thin however, complained of falling down too frequently, and said he sometimes suffered from a buzzing in his ears. (I explained to the Madam that it wasn't buzzing that bothered him, but rather burning, what with all the dishing he invites from all sides). - Well, there is another side light on the New Orleans situation, which remains as contradictory as ever.

(over)

963

Did I mention in yesterday's report that everyone is praising the philosophy in Anne Morrow Lindberg's last book. The Library is sending it to us. I don't know what it is about, but everyone seems to agree that it is good.

Fortified by a Kool, I took to the road with Mr. Pipes last night about an hour before sunset. We drove in a pick-up truck along Cane River as far as Bermuda, stopping at "Uncle Phanor's" place, - Oakland. Our purpose was to borrow a diary in French which Lestan kept during a little trip to Texas about 1849, - or possibly 1852. I am not certain. We found a flock of Prudhommes on the gallery, - the Alphonse Prudhomme own the place now. We chatted but a few moments, as it was their supper time, and so left without mentioning the diary, since the time was obviously inopportune.

I want to borrow the diary to explore it with a view of using it in one or two possible ways, if it can be translated. I suppose it is much like the English diary Lyle used in Old Louisiana and which Mr. Pipes and I are using in the Old Louisiana Scrapbook. We contemplate making an Old Texas-Scrapbook eventually, and might possibly find this of use for that book. Then, too, there is a chance that we might eventually bring out the entire Prudhomme (Lestan) diary in a book by itself, with appropriate notes, - after the manner of the Bennett Morrow one. It - this French diary, could be used most certainly, in one or the other, - or possibly both. Frankly, after we get the darn thing, - if we can, - I do not know where we can get the thing translated. I know one or two people who might do it, but they are so dizzy that I wouldn't trust the diary in their hands, but that will be something to worry about after getting the thing, - which we may not be able to do after all. But we shall try again.

On our way back, we came down the opposite side of Cane River from Bermuda to Delrose, - about 7 miles. The placid surface of the river was like a gorgeous silver mirror reflecting a magnificent red dying sunset. It was getting "first dark", but we took time out to talk with one or two of our colored friends along the way, and so home to bed and to rest, - and to think a while before sleep of those I know who would have enjoyed Uncle Phanor's front gallery and a sunset drive along Cane River.....

(over)

964

June 26th, Monday.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

An air mail report to hand, and I hasten to say thanks and to assure you that the prolonged silence on the part of the Madam merely means that she hasn't taken pen to hand since April, I believe.

I write all her letters (although you might skip mention of the fact) - for it annoys her on two counts, - first that her neuralgia in the right shoulder prevents her from writing, and second because she thinks it puts too much on me, - which isn't true. I write to the General, and the other two boys in the service, and to a host of people, - some of whom I know and some of whom I have never heard. It does keep my fingers flying each morning between five and nine, but I can do the job easily, since I skimp some, and in some instances use a form letter, as it were, so that they can be ripped off quickly.

Frequently she is giving me specific messages to one person or another, and I realize that you are on the top of the list of those thus designated. But somehow between 9 o'clock one morning and 5 the next morning, I sometimes forget, unless there is something most pressing to be included. If she appears to have been silent, it is merely because I have forgot to add her little messages, - having been so busy talking about myself.

While on the subject of correspondence, I should remark that Mr. Pipes was delighted to have your note in today's letter. He will no doubt respond directly, although he may not, because he is going hammer and tongs after the Mississippi Scrapbook, and so concentrates on the business at hand that little else enters his line of vision until the whole thing is over and out of the way. And so should there be silence both on his part and on that of the Madam, you may just charge it off to pre-occupation, - one with a tender arm and the other a full program on a Scrapbook.

(over)

400

965

I am glad you mentioned the fact that you were a little puzzled that you hadn't heard from the Madam, for this gives me the realization that I should have stressed the condition of her arm to a lot of people who may, in consequence of her silence, and my lack of explanation, may feel even as did you. I have a stack of letters on the docket for the morrow, and thanks to your re-action, I shall underline the preventive element in the Madam's physical make up at the moment.

We had a busy week end, and a hot one. It hasn't rained here for ever so long, and some of the darkies have told me that things like watermelon vines have so dried up that there will be no crop in this immediate neighborhood. Now, - and this from Caroline, - frequent local thunder showers, - always passing Melrose by, - have sufficiently moistened other sections of this Parish so that the crops are good. As for Melrose, the cotton crop is the thing, and Mr. J. B. Henry, - who is successful, both as a business of manifold interests and a planter, sometimes declares that he needs no rain for cotton raising, and I must say the crop looks pretty well without anything but heavy dews.

I am glad to hear your child is improving. Children are such a care, aren't they? - This morning by four black children began eating for the first time, - they are about five weeks old. Little Grandpa looks as though she had been dragged through a knot-hole, and obviously four children must have been something of a drain on her. I haven't named my off-spring as yet, but since they are four, I suppose I might think up something original like Black, Star and Frost, Gorham, - or some such. Mr. Pipes performed an operation on the smallest one the other day. A big old tick imbedded itself under the tail of the poor child, and as it was obviously sapping its strength, we went to work on it, - with me holding it by the back feet and the tail, - the kitten not the tick, and Mr. Pipes using a couple of matches as operating tools, we got rid of the thing, and the little one is growing by leaps and bounds. My family life has been complicated, however, by the presences of two half grown white chickens which seem to have taken up with me, and whenever it's eating time for the children, the chickens go to picking at them, and so things go into a tangle.

What with you so often, I can't for the life of me remember what subjects I have jotted down on paper and what I haven't. At the moment I am looking forward with much enthusiasm to the first large envelope that will be coming through from Mr. Martin, with the opening pages of the Chase Diary. What with the notes Mr. Martin is adding as he transcribes, and the material I have accumulated, plus some additional details to be

700

966

added, I am hoping that the thing may turn out to be well worth a volume. It seems that one hurdle will be to get the consent of the owner, and then will follow the usual considerations.

Have I already written you a million times about old Mantua, the Chase home? What, I have, - well I'll run the risk of repetition then. It was, - Mantua, - in the Kingston neighborhood, about 10 or 12 miles South of Natchez on the Upper Woodville road, - not so far from Egypt, now in ruins, and Woodstock, - home of the very rich Judge Armstrong, and about due east of Laurel Hill which has the Second Creek depression or valley between the two plantations. I have visited the place many times, before the house was taken down. If you recall the photographs of Cherokee in the Democrat Pink Papers, you have a general idea of Mantua. There was a flight of steps up to a recessed gallery, with projecting rooms to right and left. Inside were two large rooms, flanked at each end by smaller ones, and in the back ran a large wing, with dining room, etc. The back gallery was a duplicate of the front, - gallery recessed, with a beautiful staircase from the back gallery leading to the second floor, - just as a smaller stair case on the front, - in the room at the right of the gallery led to the second floor. In the center of the house on the second floor was a large hall, lighted with two or four dormer windows, - not unlike the Briars. At the right was the famous Chase Museum, - a lovely room, with alcoves, and the whole surrounded with mahogany cases, from ceiling to floor, - save for window spaces at the end of the room, - between which a full length mirror reflected everything in the room. It was here at the Rev. Chase accumulated his treasures and here he entertained such friends as B. L. C. Wallis, George Washington Sargent and others.

Balancing this room, at the other end of the house, and beyond the central hall, was another delightful room of the same size as the museum. This was a ~~sal~~ salon for general entertaining. Sometimes an orchestra was installed in the large hall, and dancing went on both in the hall and the large salon.

I think I have mentioned that the gardens numbered 370 acres, and embraces a park for deer, a large sheet of damed bayou for sub tropical water plants, etc., while the gardens themselves were gravelled, - a rather unique feature in this land without stone.

That was the country home of Dr. Chase, while his town house in Natchez was that property between the Presbyterian Church and Magnolia Inn, - once a very interesting place between its ~~horse~~ horse-shoe stair case had been dismantled and its rooms considerably altered. It was the old Walter Burling property

967

and was the Lintot home at the time one of the daughters married Stephen Minor, - later this daughter to be known as the Yellow Duchess of Concord, and the sister of the same here married Philip Nolan, of whom you may or may not have heard.

We shall see what we shall see, as regards the Diary, but I somehow feel, from what Mr. Martin has said of it, that it may be a very worthy while manuscript. Isn't it odd how these things can escape public notice for so long, - and imagine this one being rescued from Bixby or some such town in far off Arizona.

This paragraph might not be referred to in response. Curiously enough I find myself almost as isolated from a lot of stuff I want to do as at any time in the past, or perhaps a little more so at the moment. High wages in Alexandria (la.) has called away many of my colored friends who could help me locate papers and what not from my files. Aunt Cammie at the moment has enough to keep he self entertained in the big house, - there are three or four guests with her at the present time, while Mr. Pipes is so busy doing stuff from material I have gathered during the years, that he finds little opportunity to tear himself away from that, - and accordingly I sit high and dry at the moment with but slim means of shaking out a lot of stuff I should like to be exploring and amplifying. By the middle of this week, however, I have the promise of a colored youth to give me an afternoon, and I shall make the most of that to find a lot of things which I need to round out quite a few particulars which must of necessity be held up until I have the precise data I need. Isn't it curious how things can be so near and yet so far, - and to have so many people about, and yet for one reason and another, so incapacitated or pre-occupied with business at hand, that one cannot avail one's self of their services at the drop of the hat. I have had to slow up considerably during the past 8 days on this count, but shall have the well primed again before this note has reached you. But all this might be skipped, and I shall effect a solution, even though gaps of time in between sometimes force me to practice patience.

Over and over agin I may or may not have mentioned how much good has come from the package of shirts which came to hand sometime back. Each has played a most particular role and each has brought both pride and satisfaction to the objects of your generosity. There are other points I might mention in the same breath, - twenty-five at a clip to the extent of billions, but I shall let that pass for the moment, - only to say thanks and thanks again...

968

June 28th.

Report to Clipping Service:

Just a hurried line, hoping it may reach you before your departure for a prolonged week end out on the point.

The Madam prays me to assure you that but one thing keeps her from addressing you directly, - the physical impossibility of pushing a pen. She wishes me to assure you of her undying affection and to say how eagerly she looks forward to every letter, and how much your clippings mean.

For myself, I add my own Amen, and assure you that only the neuralgia keeps her from writing. As a matter of fact, she has stated quite truthfully and frankly, that were it possible for her to write but one single letter to anyone, - that letter would be to you.

While on the subject of correspondence, might I suggest that letters intended for her might be addressed directly to her and that those intended for me might be addressed to me. I reckon that may be the usual manner, but I mention it as a possibility, for I usually, - invariably get the mail, and Mr. Pipes and I run through it together, and frequently there are letters addressed to me of a confidential nature, - letters from her friends, wanting to know details, etc., and so we arrange to have those addressed to me thus inscribed so that I run through them without passing them (bearing my name) along, - although whenever ones come which are addressed to me, but contain nothing that would worry her, they are passed along, - but the rest are of course withheld.

Mr. Pipes was delighted with your note, sub-joined to the one addressed to me. He is responding shortly, I believe, as he has asked for the address.

The weather remains too hot for invalids and too dry for gardens, but I seem to find it agreeing with me.

No news of any especial interest has come to hand since my note of yesterday or the day before. For the most part, Mr. Pipes works in the library of the big house most of the day, exploring treasures set aside for extractions to be made from them for the Old Mississippi Scrapbook. At the same time, I withdraw to my house where I write things to be added to the chapters which are slowly taking form under his efforts. Frankly, I

(over)

969

could think of a better arrangement, but this seems to operate about as well as could be hoped for at the present time. I leave a loose hand on the reins, letting him select what appeals to him for the most part. Frankly, his acquaintance with Mississippi history is limited, and sometimes things seeming important or unimportant, do not appear to coincide with my ideas at all times. But there is this great advantage: - Having dwelt so concentratedly on the subject, I sometimes attribute much importance to a fact dealing with some rather remote point, while he, representing the average interest, may well be able to hit something with a general appeal. All this is mentioned just for your information

and I will be glad if you will not refer to it in correspondence. I merely wanted you to sense how the arrangements for our joint labors are framed up. Knowing what is available and to be drawn upon, and what generally is authentic, I can eventually shape up anything which slides in inadvertently or through lack of intimate knowledge of a point on his part. This method does not always satisfy me completely, but in the end, I believe the results are likely to be of the most satisfactory nature, and accordingly I am quite willing to adjust myself to it.

I am pressed for time, and shall accordingly let this for the moment, hoping that it may reach you in time to express my hope that your week end may be ever so pleasant. It will be the usual routine in these parts, but the better for thoughtfulness that forever stems from afar.

The weather remains too hot for invalids and too dry for anyone, but I seem to find it agreeable with me.

My hope of any especial interest has come to hand since my visit of yesterday to the library of the University of North Carolina. I found the library of the University of North Carolina to be a most interesting place, and I was very much pleased to find that the library of the University of North Carolina is a most interesting place, and I was very much pleased to find that the library of the University of North Carolina is a most interesting place.

970

July 5th at Melrose.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

This report should be on your desk this morning. I had planned to have it there on your return from the week end holiday, but delayed making out the report for a day or so, in order that it might be delivered on the day your return was scheduled, - and here we are on that day, and I am just making the report out.

So it goes, - what with type riters clicking and much a-do about correspondence, composition and Heaven knows what all. I do hope your outing proved pleasant, and if possible, restful. A little fresh air, - especially if it is salty, ought to do much for a keener sense for food, and the opportunity to relax a little after such a jaunt as required to get to your destination, may have been worth the investment in physical strain, I do hope.

We were delighted with your last letter, - my associate and I. You mention the availability of a volume of speeches, and ask if it would mean something to me. It would, and I appreciate your thoughtfulness. Do not rush it along until you are finished with it, however, as the need is not pressing, but will doubtless serve in good stead during the coming year.

You ask about Adam Moore. I haven't told the Madam I have heard from her, but I have. I couldn't very well tell the Madam, since she ~~you~~ would have expected to see the letter, and as there were some observations about certain circumstances that would have distressed or puzzled her, I had to withhold the letter. La Moore remains on the West Coast, - in the desert of Washington State, but has asked to be transferred to the Gulf Coast area, - probably Texas or Louisiana may be the ultimate locality where she may be expected to land. In her response to my letter, suggesting a division of material, she expressed herself as being conscious of my sarcasm, which surprised me, for I had intended none, and at the same time she confided to me that I had no idea of certain secret sorrows that were contributory to her decision to join the Army. I certainly never tried to plumb any of her secret sorrows, - and since they were secret and, as she explained it, no one but her own self knew of them, it does seem to me that I can't be blamed for having been ignorant of them.

(over)

Well, the up-shot of the whole thing was that I decided to take the column stuff and she keep the other volume on which we had labored. Very generously, she offered me the column and half of the other material, but I felt this would be unfair to her, and so I advised her that the division would be equal, and that she should know that I was turning over all of one volume over to her while I retained the column.

Now, relative to the column stuff, - and you might skip reference to any of this in any communication, - Mr. Pipes and I started work on it, but we did not see eye to eye as to the treatment, and so we let it languish, and undertook the Old Mississippi Scrapbook, based on the pattern of the Old Louisiana Scrapbook. I haven't told Mr. Pipes, but I am working by myself on the column stuff, and when I have completely my rough draft of the connecting paragraphs between the various columns and the book is completed in its first sketchy form, I shall ask him to go over with me, and that will save disagreement as to composition. It is rather up-hill business, but I think I shall make it alright.

A note from Essae Mae in yesterday's mail, posted just before she left for Chicago to give some lectures there at the University. She said that Friday a week ago, le vieux de la riviere telephoned her from the crescent city, - the first communication she had had from him in about 9 months. As the legislature was in session, - and as I suppose he thought he might get on the payroll (payroll) again, he offered to come up to baton rouge to assist with the program on the following Tuesday. I cannot say if he offered to come up to assist in getting his item, - which is definitely off, back on again, or if the offer was to assist in laying out the program for other grants for the library commission. In any event he offered to come up on Tuesday, and Miss U. expressed herself as delighted to be assured by him that "he is back on his feet again", which, I interpret to mean that he is at long last able to swing the historical writing on which he was scheduled to carry out during the past year, - but as you know, has done absolutely nothing about.

Well, anyway, la C. was delighted that he had telephoned and made the offer to run up to baton rouge on Tuesday. And then came Tuesday, - came and went, and nothing was seen of him and nothing was heard from him, - and so, in her final paragraph, la C. remarked that now she is not so sure that he is actually "on his feet again". - nor am I. Isn't is a curious business.

Aunt Cammie hasn't seen the letters, - three in number, - which have come to hand this week from old friends, addressed to others in this establishment than to the Madam's usual correspondent. Each of these letters have expressed appreciation for the number of letters I have written on behalf of the "adam, but each has scouted the idea that the Madam must be mad at them, - since they do not believe that mere neuralgia would keep her from writing, and in each case they have asked the individual, without telling me, to write and let them know why the "adam is mad at them, since it appears that I feel constrained to gloss over the matter.

Isn't it curious that everyone gets the same impression? I reckon^a I must have fallen down on the job somehow, which is probably due in part to the fact that I write so darn many letters, repeating so often the same phrases regarding her state of health, that I must neglect more often that I realize to stress her neuralgia, and thus, in fear of boring people with constant repetition, I give them, - or fail to give them, the picture of actualities. As I say, she knows not of these letters, - addressed to others here, but I wanted to pass along the information to you, since you can readily sympathize with the quandary in other people's minds which appears in a way to parallel your own wonder as to why letters in her own hand were not forthcoming.

Have had a couple of delightful notes from Nellie Wailes Brandon, in which she has passed along some delicious bits of information, - graveyard locations, etc., concerning old Benjamin Chase's family. This will all be a great help when the old man's diary comes to hand, which will probably be within another week or so.

There is a heap of other things to talk about, but I shall have to let them go. Your recent clippings have been inordinately valuable for the negro scrapbook, and we would both say thanks and thanks again. . . .

Another report will be filed shortly.....

973

Saturday, July 8th.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Hot and humid best indicate the atmospheric situation in which we find ourselves. Thank heaven for an occasional shower, even though it makes things a little sticky. The Valley Electric Company (with the Madam's son, J. H. Henry, as President) serves this locality. Its generating base is Montgomery, La., some 8 miles from here to the East, on the East bank of Red River. I don't think much of the outfit, for it always takes the company a long time to fix things when a storm or some other accident upsets the flow of electricity. Now it seems that two generators of the three required to supply adequate "juice", are down, and accordingly we are scheduled to have all power cut off for a couple of hours at a time each night from 8 o'clock on, - through out the ensuing month, - two hours off, two hours on, - and so throughout the night. It would be alright in spite of the cutting off of light, fans, ice boxes, reading machines and what not, were it necessary, which I doubt. I am under the impression that this system might be hooked up with Matchitoches during the emergency but I suppose this is not done because rates would have to be paid that outfit, and there is always a chance that Valley Electric can get away with this make shift arrangement. All the Henry boys are rich, and J. H. is among the richer, - with a finger in ever pie, and constantly sampling new bakings. He is good natured and he and I get along fine and always have, but his childish enthusiasm for making money puts him in a class quite apart from his mother, whose concept is something other than money, - even though it is nice to enjoy the fruits of his labors. After a long observation of things as they operate here, I come to the conclusion that Melrose plantation is operated purely as a plaything, and that nobody cares if it makes any money or not. I suppose the money rolls in from things like Valley Electric and a couple dozen other such enterprises, and if Melrose plantation actually operates at a loss, it becomes an asset in making deductions at income time. These are just my casual opinions, and may or may not be worth anything. Surely they cannot be of much interest to you,

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974

but I pass them along, supposing that an occasional glimpse at the local set-up may make the picture a little more clear.

The Madam continues to gain in gaiety of spirit and in general interest in things outside herself, although her advancement is slow, and she rather likes to think she isn't of much account.

This week we have had but few visitors, but those who have passed by were rather nice, and I shall tell you of one of them, - Mr. and Mrs. James Aswell, who spent Thursday afternoon here.

Mr. Aswell is the son of James Aswell, - late member of Congress, and one time head of the Normal, - now the College, at Natchitoches, at the time the Madam went to school there. The present Mr. Aswell used to write speeches for Mr. Sam Jones, when the latter was Governor. His three year salary was \$5,000.00 a year. He sometimes writes for Saturday evening Post, Liberty, etc. He told us he had just sold two stories to Liberty, and they will appear shortly.

Mrs. Aswell married Mr. Aswell after divorcing Melvin Douglas, the movie actor. Her son, Melvin Douglas, Jr., is currently in some prep school, and comes here sometimes. She is rather charming and has a good mind.

The Aswells live in the woods, half way between Natchitoches and Grand Core, and the place is quite charming, it is said, although I have never stopped by, since I never find myself on that stretch of road, - 5 miles in length, as between town and Grand Core, - unless I chance to be heading out toward Natchez, - and then I am in too much of a hurry.

Conversation was good with the Aswells, for they get around some, and are informed as to what goes on in the world. I believe Mrs. Aswell lived in Washington for some time, - as did Mr. Aswell, and they spoke interestingly of various social events there, - receptions at the Soviet embassy, etc., as well as of personalities, including Madam Clare Booth Luce, whom I think is too smart and too baggish for words, but possessed of a mind, even though unscrupulous, must be admitted to be one worthy of admiration. I think the Luce mind is hard and brittle and back up by enough driving power to make its possessor always find that the ends she may desire always worthy of any means she might stoop to employ. I dislike her twisting of facts in her political speeches, for they are obviously designed to give false impressions of events, while at the same time I listen attentively to the manner she reels off the stuff, for her manner is arresting.

975

The Aswells also spoke of Natchez where both of them had just been for the first time in their lives. I was interested in their reaction. They didn't like it.

The place isn't old, to start with. It is more of an 1870 or 1880 town than anything else, according to Mr. Aswell. The staid with Mrs. Wall at the Briers, and while they were impressed by the charm of the place, they were uncomfortably house; - the fans being too small, and the furniture too uncertain. The found Dave McKitterick at Elmscourt too dirty, as was his elegant home. That is no doubt perfectly true. They found many of the roads about Natchez very narrow and twisting and turning. That is true too. And so they didn't like the place, and I pumped them for all they were worth, for I am always delighted to get other people's reactions. It boils down to this, - their reaction I mean, - if a road is merely narrow and twisting, as opposed to the broad, cement highways of the 20th century, then Natchez cannot please, for that's the way many of the roads are. That's what makes me love them, of course, for these are what is left of the old "races." But if one had never heard of a "race," and if this particular type of beauty and charm held no appeal, - well, then they certainly would be a dull outfit.

I rambled around with all these unimportant details because I hope they indicate in a way how people above the average in cultural attainments react to something which to others appears quite in a different light. It is important for you to consider Natchez from these angles, too, because your concept of the place is likely to be biased by my enthusiasms, wherein I re-create the past and set it alongside the present in such a manner that on seeing the place for the first time, you may well be headed for a great disappointment, since many of the personalities and place over which I sing hymns of praise may have disappeared from the actual scene and remain only in my mind. And the panorama of memory in one individual's mind may well appear as nothing when another, anticipating a reality, stares into nothing - but a blur of long departed people and places.

At the moment I am reading Walter Lippman's "United States Foreign Policy", - and recommend it to you most highly. I believe it is a 1943 publication by Little, Brown and Co. It is important because it simplifies vast and obscure world problems, now awaiting the conclusion of the war, for solution. I have read about half of the book, - on the reading machine, and I recommend it to your consideration very highly. In glancing over the first chapters, you will find a stage all set for your appreciation of what should be enacted thereon in the days just ahead when America has to make up her mind as to what role she is going to attempt in what immediately follows after the cessation of hostilities.

976

The local scene rocks along much as usual. Mr. Pipes is an industrious person, and works from morning 'til night. Please don't refer to this, for I want to repeat what I have already remarked: - I would that we might soon work out some sort of an arrangement, whereby we might labor jointly rather than separately to such an extent as we are at present. In the type of thing we are doing, I think we might save a lot of time and secure as good results, if we were to attempt things jointly, rather than being impelled as at present, with me offering gobs of data, and with him selecting what appeals and putting it down without ever reading the material together. The end may be entirely satisfactory, what with his good judgement as to what the average reader wants, but frankly I would be delighted to learn what is being actually used. As for the columns, you know more about their present content than I. For the past several months, I have had nothing to do with them. He makes them up and sends them along without ever telling me of their contents. I have no doubt they are fully as good if not better than in the past when I had to depend upon others for selections and was left merely to re-phrase and put them into such a guise as would seem might appeal to the average reader. I am under the impression that his selection of material is probably better than that which I had read to me, but as I have had no one to read a column to me as yet, - none that he was written since last March, I am wholly in the dark as to their nature. I think he proceeds along this line of independence without giving the matter a thought. It isn't important, only naturally I am interested in what they are like, and of course since he knows not what I have used in the past, I am under the impression he may be repeating stuff, already used, and this doesn't matter either, since people have long forgotten what they read six months ago, - but when this material is assembled for a volume, it is likely that it will be terribly repetitious, with the same news items appearing in succeeding columns, and the phraseology quite at variance. I shall attempt correcting this method and insist on a greater share in the actual composition. Please do not refer to any of this in any communication. I merely confide to you to let you know of little problems that arise from day to day. They are not important, but merely interesting as one little cloud or another across an otherwise serene sky.

Must skip. Back soon.

977

Wednesday, July 12th.

Memorandum To Clipping Service:

Your report has just come to hand, and a thousand thanks for acquainting me with how things turn in your neighborhood. Thank Heaven you had a little respite in the open air, for somehow heat and humidity seem ever so less in enervating powers when one is out in the open and not cooped up in a city.

A note from the General indicates Washington is sweltering, too, and what with no rains here in ever so long, things are just curling up at the toes and passing out. I feel particularly sorry for the darkies, - no watermelons this year, and no vegetables either, - everything dried up. At the same time their old staple for food, - corn meal, cannot be obtained at the present time, and so their problems run on.

May I say a million thanks too for the package, which has come to hand in the same mail with your report. I have run through the several items hurriedly, and already am thinking of the glad hearts that the contents will quicken. Those who will receive will know you but in name, but the blessings will flow as whole heartedly non the less. I thank you for myself and for them. Another star, I notice from afar, is already a-twinkle in your crown, already so lustrous with gleaming constellations.

The health situation here fluctuates from fair to fair, as the days slip by. Every time the Madam gets enervated by a visit from her offspring and name sake, she is flattened out, and is inclined to be grumpy and disagreeable. She was like that Monday, - and I told her so on Tuesday, when her viewpoint had come around to normal. I think it is well to make her conscious of her bad behavior now and then, for it may inspire her to take a little more thought of herself.

Mr. Pipes and I continue in our several undertakings. I have run through the stuff thus far selected for the Old Mississippi Scrapbook. So far, so good, and I think it will be pretty well in hand within another month. At the moment we are casting about for some one in Natchitoches to do the typing of the manuscript for Old Louisiana Scrapbook. It isn't easy to find, but I believe we are on the track of someone now, and shall know shortly. We don't want to give it to

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978

Mr. Martin, as he is currently engaged on the Benjamin Chase Diary, - a two volume item, to which he is adding notes, as he transposes, and that is terribly important, - assuming the diary to be as good as we are led to believe, - without ever having seen it. Mr. Martin is 70 or more, and what with the great heat, his inclination toward appendix troubles and any old Act of God that might transpire, I think it better to let him concentrate on the Chase diary, - which must be returned shortly to its owner in Arizona, - for if illness or accident should shelf the transcription, I know not if it would ever get done. I don't know why I am setting such high store on this, but somehow I have the feeling that it is really going to be quite a valuable piece of work.

It certainly was a great pity. Mantua was taken down. The plantation came into the possession of one McKaleb, - white trash, - and white trash always look at old mansions as liabilities rather than assets. Someone, - living across the river in Louisiana, I believe, purchased the house, took it down, - and I know not what has become of the material. Of the brick wall that once enclosed the 370 acres of gardens, - some more white trash, living as tenants on Mantua, cleaned the brick at 10 cents a hundred or a thousand, - I can't remember which, - and so disposed of that remnant of what must have been a remarkable brick wall. It was four feet high, with a sturdy picket fence above, with an additional 10 feet or so, added to the 4 foot brick wall, which must have made the place quite a secured Paradise. Only some old cedars mark the spot where the drive once led in to the mansion, and were one not acquainted with the place before, the house was removed, one might easily pass it by without suspecting the glory of Mantua and its museum, its garden and its deer park.

About next week, in the press, - the Natchez Press, - you will notice that the column will be composed exclusively of a synopsis of something or other, - and the thing will be entitled "Laurel Hill", - I believe. At the moment, Mr. Pipes is struggling with the thing by himself, and I know not how the thing will turn out, but we shall see. The point of the whole thing is to get this thing copyrighted, so that we can submit it to the attention of someone like Mr. De Mille, for it appears to be a good bit of Americana, and what with an ancient railroad involved, it ought to appeal to the De Mille type of mind.

I know not, - at the present writing, - how the thing can be engineered to our satisfaction and profit, but I shall think that through in good time. I enclose on a

979

*Mr. Bauman
Woodville Railroad*

separate piece of paper the volume from which all this business is based. You secured this work for us some two or three years ago, and it has been stewing along in my mind for some time as having possibilities. Mr. Pipes, when it was brought to his attention, was equally delighted, and we accordingly are going to try to do something about it.

To get the thing well secured, - and in order to be able to handle all the research surrounding the individuals involved in the tale, - should Hollywood be interested, - I reckon I shall eventually have to drag my hips over to Woodville where while seeming to search for data on the sister of Jefferson Davis, who lived in that place, - I can hunt up full details regarding the lady involved, - who will appear in the Natchez Press, as Mrs. Vaughn. All this must sound terribly complicated to you, - as it does to me, - but the point of all this "round about" Business (a la Sven), - is that is we can get the synopsis copyrighted, introducing certain details not in the original work, - and having once interested the producers in such a script, we shall be able to turn out the whole work, - frankly based on the life of the real person, but arranged in such a manner as to make our script and our copyright claim of sufficient tightness as to merit payment for our trouble. In referring to the matter, you might omit the name of the actual writer of the original work, - and naturally it would be well not to mention her name to any one, for much depends in the Hollywood business in keep her name from the producers until after they get in a state of mind to sign for the story about Mrs. Vaughn.

Now just what all this stir will lead to, - if anything, - I know not. It seems to me that properly arranged, - and a couple of major emotions stressed, the opus offers wonderful material, - with a twist and a concept quite original in treatment, and quite exciting from an entertainment point of view. I don't know as the thing will go over at all. It certainly may not. And yet here may be stuff that the movies may be looking for, - what with no more war stuff being turned out, and a seeming swing back to the American scene in the offing. I suppose we ought to get some recompense if we discover the stuff and offer it in a presentable fashion. It is the idea the movie people are interested in, - and they are willing to pay for. We have an idea, - such as it is, - and of course, shall be delighted to accept payment for same, in the event they like it well enough to use.

All this talk, - and all so vague, but I do want you to keep at least with how things turn, and so send along these rough references, although the ideas expressed still remain half baked.

over

980

I am calling the attention of the main station (radio) in Jackson, Miss., to the Natchez broadcasts on Monday nights of the Old Natchez Scrapbook, - at the same time sending Jackson a column of the Old Mississippi Scrapbook, with a view to drumming up a sponsor in that place. I would do better to run over to Jackson, but that is not to be thought of on two or three counts. I shall be lucky if I make Natchez and Woodville before the summer is out, but it will be worth while trying to interest Jackson in the Old Mississippi Scrapbook as the basis for broadcasting sponsored programs, - since the idea is at least different from the usual (interruption).

Well, - I don't recall where I left off, but I reckon I had pretty thoroughly covered the subject at hand, - even though I may not have completed the sentence.

I would add this point, - however, - I am setting some store on my Woodville trip on many counts. In the first place I want to spend some time with the Sheriff of Wilkinson County, - adjoining Adams County on the South, - with Woodville as the County seat. My friend, Sheriff Conner of Adams County, will introduce me to the Wilkinson official, and that will start me off right in the records, - which they say, are wonderful. I also want to call on the Lewises who live there in a fine old home. They own the Woodville Republican, I believe, and have a file running back to the time of that paper's inception, - under old Andrew Marschalk, - about 1804, - I believe. I could count on my friend, George Lester, of not too distant Waverly Plantation, at Bains, Louisiana, just south of Woodville, to open a lot of doors for me, but according to the St. Francisville newspaper, Mr. Lester has just announced that he will run for Congress this autumn, and so I reckon he will be rather too busy with vote-getting to go in for old houses, - although his collection of papers is marvelous, it is said. I believe the cuts used in the Bennett Barrow volume were taken from Mr. Lester's files.

As I write these lines, I don't know if Mr. Pipes will go with me or not, - but I think not. I think he has a great aversion for that region, - based on what I do not know, - but which I can understand, - based, I think, on possibly some unpleasant family memories of that region, - although this is guess work, - and confided to you in great confidence, and please skip mention of the same. But regardless of this situation, I think I might like it that way, for eventually I may be able to secure some one to read some of the things to me, and I should prefer to do the ~~xxx~~ scouting about by myself sometimes, and in the end, when something of ours is published jointly, I reckon I'll do the speech making and so on, - which will suit me fine. Must skip, - and thanks again a million.

981

981

July 22nd, at Melrose.

Memorandum to Clipping Service;

A million little things to say, - none of them important, - but several of them of common interest, such as speculation as to how things will turn politically, how long it should take Grandpa to remove the children from their milk diet, etc., etc.

I certainly enjoyed the clippings to hand. The volume mentioned appears to be astonishing in its success. It must be excellent, and I agree with the publishers, that it certainly must be well worth waiting for.

I hope the week end at Nassau Point turned out to be a degree of perfection. I find myself think of that place, and hoping that the sun is as bright and the air as cool as it is at this bend in Cane River, as I pen these lines. It will mean a lot to Charlie to be with his off-spring and with his friends, too, and the week end will be the more gay because of his presence.

In these parts things continue much as usual, with the Madam apparently a little stronger ~~xxxx~~ physically, although her depressions frequently last out a day or so. That makes life difficult for her, and since hers is a strong personality, it makes those who come in contact with her feel a little depressed, too. I know not how things will turn. Sometimes I think it would be better for her to come down stairs and fly into the garden at full speed and so wear herself out in doing what she would like to do, but is frightened for fear she will have a stroke that will not kill but only cripple. It is difficult to assist a child that is to say a head-strong child or one frequently depressed. It is even more so in the case of mature people. The Henrys are all so contradictory and so unpredictable that one day's height is the next day's depth, and one can never envision one moment's character in relation to the next succeeding moment. Fortunately they have money so that is never a problem with them, but what to do with it, and how to make themselves happy is often a problem that they cannot solve.

182 Tuesday, July 25th.

382

There certain is a break, as between this side of the page and the other. Nothing of particular interest has occurred in the mean time, - save for a letter from Miss Culver.

This, of course, is confidential for the moment.

According to Miss C.'s letter, received in Monday's mail, she and Lyle will arrive today! Lyle will remain here at least for a week while Miss C. continues her trip to North Louisiana. She will return here a week hence, and Lyle will either return with her to Baton Rouge or New Orleans, - or may return here. The whole thing is just too much.

On hearing this news, I immediately decided to head out for Natchez on the morrow, - Wednesday, - and shall remain there about a week. I must go to Woodville shortly as the Beaumont business is nearing completion, and I want to get a lot of particulars there. I would prefer to go a little later, but I would find remaining here fruitless when the situation is so involved, and so I think it better to pull out shortly after Miss C. and Lyle arrive.

The Madam thinks they will not arrive, - at least that Lyle will not come. - I can't say what I think. Only in view of all that has transpired during the past year, I am equally amazed that Miss Culver is bringing him and that the Madam is enchanted at the prospect of his advent. At the time she took pen in hand to write you a note, I learned that she wrote Lyle just a line, - but although she prayed him for word of himself, none has ever come to hand. One must admit he is a dreadful bag, and with no correspondence from December to July, it seems remarkable that he should consider heading in at this time.

I have much more to report, but am forced by circumstance to get this off to you today. I do want to say how much we have enjoyed Prime Minister of Paradise, and all, and I think there is an idea that will come out of that. You will forgive my haste, but you can readily understand that I have a million things I want to get out of the way before threatening guests arrive, - and before I depart. In Natchez I hope to accomplish a lot of things. We are flirting with the Jackson, Miss., radio station, and I shall contact them and arrange a good program for them to listen in to on the Natchez broadcast while I am there. I can't remember if I mentioned on the other side of this page that I had a curious, - but nice card, from Miss Myra Smith, saying "We are home again (at Devereux)". Have one important question to ask, - and also may have some news shortly. I shall of course contact her immediately when I reach Natchez. Must skip.

183

383

July 26th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Reports are to be acknowledged, and particularly would I say that 35 times 35 would not half express my gratitude for having these to hand before I wanted to take off for Woodville and Natchez.

It was good to have the report, and I would respond in detail to the several points, although I cannot cover them half in this brief space. Only thanks, and thanks again for having so thoughtfully anticipated something of so much moment.

Things turn here in mild confusion. Miss Culver, - and please refer to none of this in any communication to the Madam, - Miss Culver telephoned me from Baton Rouge yesterday noon. She said that she had waited for Lyle to arrive, and when it was time for her to start, she telephoned him, - in New Orleans, not finding him in Baton Rouge anywhere, and that she contacted him on the phone, that he seemed groggy and that he said he had forgotten all about coming to Melrose. Miss Culver said he had seemed so enthusiastic about it when she discussed it with him on Saturday that she could only be puzzled that he had so quickly forgotten. I know not if he ever intended coming up or if he really forgot. Any circumstance regarding the matter is hopeless so far as making sense, - unless one turns on the bottle in the conclusions, - which I suppose to be the only explanation.

Miss Culver, after waiting so long for him, had to forego coming to Melrose on Tuesday, but had to drive direct to North Louisiana. She will come to Melrose on Sunday for a day or two, but I shall not see her although Mr. Pipes will, of course, and the Madam.

In having to report my conversation to the Madam, I did so with regret, since I knew it would depress her. It did. She is expending her energies in fretting too much, and I can't say if I think she will ever get righted again without a prolonged trip to some mountains or other. North Carolina, where she should go, is too far away. The Hot Springs, Arkansas, is so crowded one can not find a place, and, added to this (over)

984

is the fact that she herself doesn't like to have it suggested to her that she needs a change. So goes it.

I plan to drive to Baton Rouge on Thursday (July 27th) with J. H. Henry, - the son who runs Melrose, a good five cent cigar, and terribly successful. At Baton Rouge, - if I go there, for one never knows from one moment to the next what the Henrys will do, - I shall spend the afternoon at the Library Commission going over the photographs in the files with Miss Culver's secretary. In the evening, I shall spend a pleasant hour, - and the night, - with Dr. and Mrs. Whitaker, - the latter being Alice Walworth's sister. As she has a lot of original Audubon stuff, Jefferson Davis letters, Gordon Diaries, etc., etc., - I am looking forward to a lot of profit. Should the Whitakers not be in Baton Rouge, I shall telephone Eli Whithers, and spend the night with them. In the morning, - Friday, I shall run up to St. Francisville, and spend the day with Miss Louise Butler at the Cottage, and thence on the morrow, - after contacting the proper people through Miss Louise, I shall proceed to Woodville, where I shall probably spend Saturday and Sunday, digging out particulars regarding Madam Beaumont and all. And then on Monday I shall go on to Natchez, where I shall contact Miss Myra and the Garden Club and Heaven knows whom all, and after a few days there I shall head back this way, spending about Thursday or Friday in Alexandria with Dr. and Mrs. Rand, who will take me to Madam David's house. The latter is a sister of Mrs. Sally Hertzog, of Magnolia Plantation, just down Cane River from Melrose. Madame Davis a few years back, purchased a huge bookcase with the books in it, from the Estate of John Jenkins, - the ante bellum owner of Elgin Plantation, in Natchez. He has never explored the contents of this book case, and has promised to let me do so. Dr. Jenkins was a person of parts, and his library was famous. I am hoping to find something worth while, in going through the collection. And so you see I have a fairly heavy ~~xxxx~~ schedule ahead of me, - assuming that I do get off on Thursday, and it is not difficult for you to imagine how much it means to me to have your report to hand before setting sail. If I do get off or do not, at least it is possible for me to make plans.

More I would write, but I must get on with a flock of things that are pressing for attention. May I say thanks a million and also may I congratulate you on your suggestion regarding the wisdom of submitting The Fabulous 52 to a publisher of Culberson and the like. I think you should have 552 citations for such a thought, for it may bear great fruit. It is swell of you to handle the business, and makes the game twice as thrilling. Things were in such a jangle here when your note arrived that I have had to let the reading of it go until the nerves in the eye department come into focus again, - which will be before night, and I shall take up this thread as soon as I touch a typewriter again. ...

985

Mondat at Melrose.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Back at home base again, and delighted with the report, acknowledging receipt of 52 and all. It is grand that the Clipping Service can also act as literary agent, and another manuscript, - Old Louisiana Scrapbook, - will doubtless be on the way again shortly.

My trip, - in so far as things acquired, was successful. At Baton Rouge I picked up the Dr. Cartwright Journal. At Miss Louise Butler's I picked up a flock of original papers, including much Laurel Hill stuff, - as well as papers of 1868 and 1869, - newspapers.

At Woodville I had a prolonged sitting with the Mayor who was most kind. I located Mrs. B.'s house which still remains much as she left it, (it), - and located the sight of her other activities, including Boston Row and the Railroad Station.

In Natchez I discovered that much of the Chase diary was ready. It proves to be excellent. I think it can be whipped into shape, and brought out under the title of "God Almighty and Mr. Chase." (autobiography by the latter)".

I cut short my visit, however, thanks to a rumor, and hurried home without stopping in Alexandria. There had been a deep depression here, and things went haywire as between the Mistress and the collaborator.

I have worked hard to smooth that out, and he will, - as now planned, - go to Baton Rouge to visit Miss Eli, currently there with her family, and copy a lot of material I found there in L. S. U. - That is the story. His visit in Baton Rouge will be long, and he will probably not return here.

I am too exhausted to say how I shall work out our cooperation in literary affairs at the moment, but we shall continue, as we get along famously together. He will forward you his address as soon as it is determined in Baton Rouge, and manuscripts will be forwarded to you from time to time.

288

986

I shall do columns here as best I can, - and that is difficult, what with fluctuating spiritual situations as on the part of my original assistant. These I shall send to Baton Rouge to be touched up, with additional original short stories added to them. These short stories, - about animals, etc., once copyrighted in the Press, will be forwarded to the producers of animated pen sketch movies, - Walt Disney, etc. That may prove interesting.

Mr. Martin's assistance will be terminated as of the 15th of this month, which is a great pity, but that must be for the moment. Later this week, what with the early termination of the war and Mr. Belle's possible need for his things, I shall have it all crated and forwarded to Mississippi, where it will be housed in a building owned by Mrs. Ferriday Barnes. That will give me a certain freedom of feeling, in the event that any untoward event should make me want to move quickly.

I shall have to spend more time away from here, in order to collaborate, and I do hope one book or the other may bear some kind of return shortly, in order to facilitate this desire. My absences will, if this be possible financially, be more and more frequent, and gradually things will taper off.

In fine, that is how things stand now. My collaborator is one with whom we shall both find much pleasure in working with in the future, and any communication you may care to make to him will be strictly confidential, - and as I shall see him frequently, it is good to know that information may be passed along that way. Letters for the Madam and me should be addressed to her when they are joint affairs. Mine should be addressed to me in my name.

I know not how things will work out during the late summer and autumn, but with the dejection that borders on wandering, with quick swings from enthusiasm to vituperation, seem to warrant making any kind of a provision that may be turned to in an emergency. I am delighted to say that the boys are more than appreciative of my efforts during the past years, and even now, I appear to be about the only one who can hold any kind of a steady point of regard.

I shall write more shortly, but I must mention again how much the report means to me, - the one arrive just before I left. I have conserved it as much as possible and it means much to know it is available. Soon, may it please God, the literary efforts may begin paying a dividend and that will mean much, - and it is so good that we are all associated in this undertaking, - the collaborator as well as myself.....

288

987

Saturday, September 9th.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It has been rather quiet here these past few days, and the thermometer decidedly down, making a suggestion that autumn can't be far in the offing.

I am rather optimist, relative to the general working out of things during the months ahead. I have no specific item to make such a state of mind explainable, - but just a feeling like that.

The Madam's health continues much the same. She remains upstairs except for supper when she comes down. She spends most of the time on her sofa, and is in bed before dark. She sees red whenever she thinks of the collaborator, but as that only produces high blood pressure, I always attempt to spill oil on troubled waters at the mention of his name. I never breathe a reference.

I expect to run down to Baton Rouge this coming week, - about Thursday, I expect, although I may put it off until the following week. Will advise. My going depends in part upon the possibility of a car from here going in that direction, for that method of travel is much easier and of course much less expensive.

Relative to Fabulous Fifty-Two, I am having our local Cane River artist do a series of her own primitives, illustrating the text. This type of book would be entirely apart from the one illustrated from the one with regular playing card illustrations. I think the playing card illustrations would be good for an inexpensive addition with popular appeal. The one illustrated with primitives would be more in the Art class, and sold at a higher figure, I think. Both would not have to come out at the same time, but the one could follow the other in a season or two.

At the moment the Madam is reading an occasional old newspaper to me, for about 2 hours every other day. This provides me with material for a column. I forward the same, - without her knowing it, to Mr. P. who adds a folk lore story to the column, and forwards the whole to the Press, in order that the folk lore stuff may be copyrighted. With a group of these, we shall send a letter to Walt Disney and some of the other makers of films of the animated cartoon type, and we shall see what we shall see. Some of the little stories are from half forgotten Louisiana folk tales and a few are original, and I know not if they are of interest to the movie

(over)

Miss Mahiers, during her visit to her home in Baton Rouge, suitably frames a few of the Cane River items, and later in the season a show will be arranged at the University of Oklahoma, whereat certain Art critics will view and applaud. This will make nice press notices to accompany any of the items we have in mind for printing. - when the illustrations are sent along with the text.

Dr. Miller is in New York, - at the George Washington Hotel. I believe that is on Lexington Avenue at 23rd Street. She is scheduled to be connected with psychiatric doings at Bellevue from now until May, I believe. I merely mention her presence in New York for your own information. It would be alright if you did or did not telephone her. Frankly, I think she is pretty busy and is likely to find the Bellevue business much too strenuous for her physical set up. Under such circumstances, I think you might find the contact leaving something to be desired, and I should not bother to undertake it, unless I had lots of time on my hands, as I feel certain, you have not. I believe she has lots of friends in New York, so she isn't pining away. On second thought, I think I would skip the contact for the moment, - but I mention her presence in Manhattan regardless.

Accordingly this letter has been interrupted half a dozen times, and the hourglass indicates the advent of the postman, so I shall get this going so you may have it early in the week.

are original, and I know not if they are of interest to the movie
library. I have not been able to locate the original film, and a few
carbon types, and we shall see what we shall see. Some of the
Walt Disney and some of the other makers of films of the animated
type. I am a group of these, we shall send a letter to
you in the future, in order that the film may be
to the film, and when a film is sent to the column, and I will send
one to you.

(OVAR)

Chase Diary

989

Memorandum to Clipping Service

I might repeat, while I think of it, that so far as the Madam is concerned, she has not heard from Mr. P. since he left. I appreciate his viewpoint in not writing, - still I should have dropped a formal line, had I been in his place, I think. Accordingly, when she asked me if I had ever heard from him, I lied and said "No", - making it seem less extraordinary to her that she had not. As a matter of fact, we maintain a very brisk correspondence.

It will be good if the Scrapbook idea does go over, for that will enable me to formulate some plans preparatory to doing some joint work with someone, either in Baton Rouge or Natchez. Having my collaborator removed from this scene, and the Adam's health leaving her without energy, my own opportunity to do much is greatly reduced, of course, and I am counting on returns from the Scrapbook to surmount that barrier.

In some of the transcriptions done by Mr. Martin, - before he was lopped off so unexpectedly, is a very dry and uninteresting history of Oakland College, by Benjamin Chase himself. Oakland, you will recall, was situated near Rodney, and not far from the home of David Hunt, who was its strongest patron. It operated from the early 1830's until after the Civil War, when it was turned into Alcorn College, - of which I have spoken to be you before, I believe. With the data at hand, plus other material collected in the past, I believe I can make quite an interesting article about the place for some such things (over)

990

as the Miss. Hist. Society, - and at the same time do
a newspaper article, too, - when I have someone with whom
I can work.

Among other things the Chase account contains is a list
of the first Board of Directors, including such names as
Isaac Ross, - of Prospect Hill Plantation, whose will in
1836 caused such a racket in the American Courts; Dr. Rush
Nutt of Laurel Hill plantation (Rodney area), whose son,
Dr. Haller Nutt, built Longwood; Smith Coffee Daniels whose
son, I believe, - or perhaps it was he, who built Windsor; etc.
There are about a dozen names, - and all of them prominent in
the Rodney area, and they form a splendid Who's Who list,
which may be used as a guide at some time in ferreting out the
great and near-great in that region.

I have never mentioned that you are handling anything
for us as agent; and I mention this so that you may omit
reference to R. P. if you should think of it in directing
letters to the Madam.

A letter from Mrs. Brandon (Nellie Wailes) in Atlanta
for the summer, - and confidential, - tells me that Mrs. Moore
is having a furlough in September; and says she knows I am
looking forward to seeing her, as she is coming to Natchez
where one daughter lives and to Baton Rouge where the other
lives. Well, I shall be glad to see her, but isn't it curious
I have never heard anything about such an intention. I shall
telephone her in each of the two cities, and see what is up.
After all, September is moving into its final stage, and
if Mrs. Brandon's information is correct, the furlough should
be expended before long.

So goes it, and I recognize this to be a dull letter,
as I tread water, and formulate plans. Take altogether, I am
rather optimistic about the outlook ahead, and I must say that
during that interim, things here are altogether pleasant, now
that we are alone and nothing is being accomplished. I shall
employ this time to conserve strength and do what I can by way
of suggestions by mail to the collaborator.

On my Reading Machine I have recently read Churchill's
Blind, Sweat and Tears, - which isn't so much a book, but
rather his speeches; Hilton's The Story of Dr. Wassell and
Jean Nathan's Journal or Josephine, - none of which I
particularly recommend, although the last named is rather nice
in its extreme simplicity of Journal-izing. With my radio out of
whack, I read these after folding up at night. I shall
be away about a week, returning here probably about the 25th.

991

October 4th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It would do your heart as much good as it does mine if you
could see how much the several items, recently come to hand,
mean, and are going to mean, to the ~~several~~ several individuals
who will make use of them. The arrival was particularly opportune,
for Clemence, the artist, has had quite a hard struggle since
her husband's death cut off the Relief check, and when I gave
her two of the summer dresses, - the green checkered one and the
flowered (flowered) one, she was happy as a lark. I shall save
the others to check up on the greatest needs, and shall parcel
them out shortly. As Clemence can wear these without alteration,
they are doubly apt as gifts, and she wishes me to say to you
how much they mean to her at the present time. As for the woolen
pieces, - the scarfs, - I shall retain them for another month
or so when the cold winds start sweeping down the mile and a half
road which must be traveled by the youngsters from here on their
way to school. They will be as proud as peacocks of their new
acquisitions, and will be warm at the same time, thanks to
your thoughtfulness and generosity. May I say thank you?

And now I want to bore you with a tentative project for
the Library Commission which has come to mind during the past
couple of days. I have written Miss Culver a Thank You note for
her kindness in taking me to St. Francisville during my recent visit
to Baton Rouge, and in the same letter I have confided to her that
I have a project to discuss with her that should make the Library
Commission develop for the benefit of Louisiana to a point
comparable to what the Library of Congress stand for to the Nation.
I have remarked only that much, - which is most certainly a
broad statement, - but to you I shall sketch the idea roughly, -
and idea which I shall take up with her when next I see her.

As I understand it, the Louisiana Library Commission establishes
libraries in the several Parishes of Louisiana, supervises their
operation, selects their personnel, acts as purchasing agent for
all the libraries in the State, and each year get a few hundred
thousand dollars out of the State Legislature for the operation of
these libraries.

These facts being so, and the additional fact that the
Commission interests itself in behalf of the parish libraries
in contemporary publications only, the Commission ought to institute
an Old and Rare Department, - headed of course by me at a fat salary.

(over)

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992

The primary purpose of the project would be to supply each individual Parish with all the data, - and where ever possible, all the originals or transcripts thereof, of data dealing with each individual Parish.

Accordingly if a research worker, writer, economist or politician wished information concerning anything in a particular Parish, - say Natchitoches, he might find everything on the subject in the files of the local Natchitoches library, without having to flounder around in a dozen private libraries, - too frequently not accessible, - or even known to him. At the same time a complete catalogue, - or a duplicate of everything in the individual Parish library, might be found in the files and stalls of the Library Commissions head office in Baton Rouge.

My idea would be that where ever possible the original documents would be acquired from private collections and housed by the commission. In cases where the original material is not available for the Commission's files, a micro-film of the collection should be made in duplicate, - one for Baton Rouge and one for the local Parish.

For any research worker, - on almost any subject dealing with Louisiana, - past or present, - the Melrose Scrapbooks would be of inestimable value. These could be micro-filmed in duplicate, - one copy for Natchitoches library and one for the Baton Rouge main office. As indicated above, these subjects range from rare and historic documents of the colonial and ante bellum period right down to yesterday.

The same might be said of any one of the 25 or how many Parishes throughout the State, and George Lester's Collection at Waverly, - covering West Feliciana, or Miss Louise Butler's covering the same Parish, are but two other examples of invaluable data, which, if once assembled, catalogued and made available, both in the local Parish library and in the main office at Baton Rouge, would provide the State with a top to bottom picture and day to day account of itself, its history, its political and military aspects, its industries, its publications, etc., etc., ad infinitum. Once this were established and aired to America, I feel sure that it would be looked to, - the Louisiana pattern, as a model for 47 other states to make available to all its citizens, anywhere within the State's boundaries, everything concerning the State that could be desired, - available through the medium of the local Parish or County library, and through the main office, available to the rest of the world through its inter-library loan system.

2.

993

I regret to say that the present Commission does not keep on file the Parish papers published through out the State. I think all of these should be kept on file, and I think the Commission from time to time should also acquire ante bellum newspapers whenever they are available. If the head of the Commission doesn't sense the value of such items, I am not sure that the value of all these other things could be made apparent to her. But I should like to try.

My claim to instituting such a department as outlined above rests primarily upon whatever success I have had in the past in rounding up original material, skipped over or ignored by W.P.A projects, people like Prof. Davis, etc. Heaven knows the field in old documents had been pretty thoroughly gone over before ever I struck the place, - and yet some rather precious nuggets have been sifted out of the soil since my advent.

I guess my problem is to convince the powers that be that there is more to a Libraries business than to supply casual readers with contemporary best sellers. That will not be easy, - and it may not be possible, - and if not, the project can never be put over. And yet, in the event the idea could be planted in the mind, - and I could create the job for myself, it would in the end, I believe, prove of the greatest value to the State, and at the same time offer a whole lot of people a lot of interesting and fairly well paying jobs. Up to the present time, I believe the Commission employs no men, - and for the most part I fear that those employed by the Commission are more interested in keeping the tread mill going rather than instituting anything new. Miss C. has been successful these last 18 years in getting nice grants from the Legislature. Possibly she may continue on the same tempo. Possibly I can sell her the idea of making the Commission famous. I shall see what I can do.

I apologize for burdening you with all these thoughts and aspirations, but somehow I instinctively feel you, too, are interested, - and who knows what might not transpire, should such a department be established. For my part, I reckon I would do much field work, - using each Parish library as a base for accumulating stuff in the individual Parishes. Finding the stuff would be the first thing, - and local librarians should at least be able to put me in touch with owners of old and rare, and should house the paraphernalia. An operator of a micro-filming machine and a person to transcribe stuff would be about all that would be necessary at first, - after which the housing and proper cataloging, etc., etc., would naturally develop as the project proved its worth. But I shall spare you the pain of further chatter for this time.

388

394

In the Pink Papers, you may recall, in the article on Cherry Grove, that there was quite an account of the destruction of Clifton, the fine old mansion which was dynamited during the Civil War. According to historians of that era and subsequently, it was always understood and recorded that all the splendid interior furnishings of the house were blown up at the same time.

During my recent visit in Natchez, I ran up on an old inventory of all the furnishings of Clifton, giving dates of the removal of these household effects, - quantities of things, - silver, paintings, beads, mirrors, squirrel cages, etc., to different places in Natchez, - to Stanton Hall, Elmscourt, etc., etc.

The discovery of this old document, some of it in the hand of Mr. Frank Surget, owner of Clifton at the time, is valuable on two or three counts, - in that it corrects the 80 year old theory that the contents of Clifton were blown sky-high with the house, it gives, too, a perfect details of what the house contained, and it suggests that a long time at least 5 weeks was afforded the owners to remove their duff.

I have written an article for The Democrat about all this, using it as a subtle opening gun for a series of two or three other articles about the bluffs. Of course what I am eventually trying to do, - and I think I may succeed, is to tear up the railroad tracks now occupying the bluffs, and get them away from what should become the finest promenade on the Mississippi River, - a continuation of the Park already stretching along a part of the bluff. Well, I shall get these articles printed before the advent of Governor Bailey, and I shall twist his ear a little on the night of the 19th when I shall be comparatively alone with him at Devereux, Natchez, - and particularly the politicians, are going to be so furious when they learn that but Roman, Miss Myra and I were cloistered with the Governor, but let them stew, - it will do them no harm, and possibly they may get a little respect for "behind that curtain", should the railroad tracks be torn up over a tea cup. One or two of the politicians (sorry about the spelling) politicians have very valuable rights of way in railroad spurs, branching out from the main line on the bluffs to adjacent property, - some of these rights running through other people's property, and although no train ever runs over these spurs, the holders of the rights naturally hold a threat over the owners of the property through which the spurs pass to the property and terminus of the right of way. But these are rights which they may well relinquish, - since they are merely nuisance rights, and if by tearing up the tracks to give the Bluffs back to the City, these little souls are infuriated, it is alright with me. So things turn in these parts, and I shall write you again, - and in the mean time your good offices in behalf of the colored people here to will be the better clothed, thanks to you, will go on apace.

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388

Friday afternoon.

Mamoranum to Clipping Service:

Home yesterday evening, and delighted withal to find so many reports awaiting my arrival at the Post Office, - 25 individual items, not to mention a flock of particular paragraphs and valuable clippings, for none of which can I find adequate words to say thanks, although I hope that a telepathetic understanding may indicate the sentiments, and later in this report I shall indicate how opportune, - almost as though foreseen, is the value of all that this means to me in concrete form.

Shall I start at the beginning of my little trip, - and run hurriedly through, - all the details of which, are more or less confidential. I shall indicate the ones which are not confidential.

I arrived at Baton Rouge late Tuesday night, and spent a busy time there until Thursday noon. Mr. P. and I ran over a lot of things together, working out many details of things to be undertaken. Among other things, I proposed some sort of thought be given to a humorous book of an ante bellum flavor, based on paragraphs from the column, - the patent medicine advertisements, curious brief news items, etc., which might be incorporated in a small volume, the several paragraphs separated from each other by individual cuts from the old newspapers. We are thinking of getting this up and sending it to the Oklahoma Press. We also worked out some details regarding the American Aesop series, with what kind of illustrations to be incorporated, etc.

Calling on Miss Culver Wednesday, I told her I was going to St. Francisville on Friday. She offered to drive me up, and asked Mr. P. to go. He accepted, and on Thursday, we went. This is very confidential, - but may be of no fruit bearing in itself. At St. Francisville we stopped for a Coca-Cola, and I took that opportunity to suggest that the Library Commission might profit by greater publicity, and that it would do well to rival L. S. U. with a Department of Old and Rare. I pointed out that the past years had been busy with accumulation of very rare items, which if properly released to the press, would give the Commission much attention, - equal to or rivaling that received by the L. S. U. Department. If the Library Commission could set aside some money for such publicity, Mr. P. and I could handle it, as I already have enough material at hand, - with a view to much more in the future, to keep the Library Commission in the papers for quite a time. Also we would be prepared to supply material over

996

to other departments, should they call upon the Lib. Com. for material, - as they frequently do. It would interest you in passing to remark that Huey Long was always coming to see Miss Culver for additional data on Benvenuto Cellini. Well, Miss Culver thought the idea a splendid one, but apparently couldn't think just off hand how it could be accomplished, - that is how the funds could be tapped. That is something for her to ponder upon during the next couple of weeks, and then she plans to come through this way, and I shall have a round with her about it. Nothing may come of all this, but knowing the right people, one might as well drive for all one is worth on such lines, - particular as we are to skim off the cream, - should any form on the surface of the Library Commission's allotment.

We stopped at Waverly to call on theesters. It is a lovely old place, with a fine avenue of moss draped oaks, and the house, of course, is ante bellum. Mrs. Lester is an artist, and is doing some lovely calendars by hand, reproducing Audubon's plates on them, and also some elephant size plates, which are grand. Mr. Lester took "r. r." and me into his lovely big library on the second floor. His treasures of unpublished documents is astonishing. I can only say I hated the idea of ever pulling out.

But we had to go on to Miss Louise's, where we found ourselves an hour later. It is only a few miles above Waverly, and we had a pleasant hour there, - after which I headed Miss C. and Mr. P. back toward Baton Rouge, and I remained until the next day. As Mr. Bob wasn't well, and as there were other guests, I got no where in the document department.

On to Natchez, I found Rowan and Miss Myra deep in Trace stuff. I am doing a few articles gratis for the Democrat on that subject, - particularly as it effects the Bluffs. The Governor of Mississippi, - Bailey, comes to Natchez on the morning of October 19th, and has a busy day ahead of him. He will visit a fair, do something else, - a luncheon, I believe, and at night attend a Trace banquet. Three hours have been given up to him to do nothing, during which he will loiter at Devereux. Some folks in Natchez will resent it a little, but this is likely to be what happens. Miss Myra, as his hostess, will have four guests for supper during this interim. She has asked the Governor and his lady, Rowan and me, - and I have tentatively accepted. Rowan is delighted that I shall have the Governor's ear, and I shall use the time to get the railroad tracks, now cluttering up half the bluffs swept away by the Governor's decrees. Some important people will resent exclusion from Devereux, while knowing that I am inside, but I can stand the resentment. You will also readily appreciate how about twenty paragraphs in the last report will stand me in good stead to effect this contact.

I did a whole flock of other things, which may or may not bear fruit in the future, contacting John Martin several times, on purely social grounds. Being out off, as explained before, was done not at all on financial grounds, but on a whim.

2. 997

Tuesday was my last day in Natchez. I was busy in the morning at the Garden Club getting data for the Democrat articles, and visiting the home of Benjamin Chase, next to the Presbyterian Church, where I got some very interesting data. That whole story is shaping up into a fabulous opus for someone like Spencer Tracy, should it ever reach that point. The story would be based on the story of the Bible Society in America, which old Chase helped get going, but I shall dwell on that at another sitting. In the afternoon, I called on Miss Jeanne McDowell at Oakland, and back home had a bath in preparation for calling on old Mrs. Davis. A telephone message invited me to the Joe Dixon's, who were entertaining for Charles and Myrtle, - the latter having just returned from South America. Eight o'clock was the time, but I didn't get there until 10. For at Mrs. Davis, I found two iron trunks of papers which had just come to her from the bank vaults where they had been since the Civil War. There were grand overseer's books, accounts, plans, letters and heaven knows what all. It was the property once of Frank Surget and allied members of his family. The story of Clifton, the Frank Surget home, may have occurred to you, as having been mentioned in some article or other in the Pink Papers, - Clifton being the home that was blown up by a Yankee Officer, mad because his name had been forgotten when F. Surget made up a dinner party list. It had always been said that Clifton and all its contents was blown sky high, but here in these precious old papers was a list in Frank Surget's hand detailing all the furnishings of Clifton, and indicating where all the several items had been disposed of before lovely Clifton was dynamited, - lists of paintings, precious bric-a-brac, tables, mirrors, etc., - some going to F. Stanton's (Stanton Hall, some going to A. F. Merrill's (Clmscourt), and so on and so forth. Here was a correction of history, and a fine opus to use for my newspaper fight for clearing the Bluffs. But as I was leaving Natchez, and could not borrow the papers, as they could not leave Natchez until a divission had been made among the heirs, - of whom Miss Kate Davis is one, I asked her daughter to take this list of several pages to Mr. Martin the next day, - and so you will readily see how about five paragraphs of the report stands me in good stead, and how much they counted for, for otherwise I might never have gotten to first base, - although in taking that chance, I knew nothing of what you had anticipated. How wonderfully works a mind that is supported by two hearts beating in perfect unison.

At 10 o'clock I went on to the Dixon Party, and chatted long with Charles, - Mrs. Moore, of all people blowing in five minutes after I arrived. She looked well in her WAC uniform, and not tired, although just having completed the trip from the State of Washington. I continued my conversation with Charles, and later joined la Moore and her daughter, up from Baton Rouge, and Rowan, at a table in a room by ourselves, while other guest dined in other rooms. Our talk was general. On leaving the

998

party, Charles and Myrtie took us home, - to our respective homes, - Mrs. Moore and Daughter to the Natchez hotel, where they were stopping for the night, - leaving as they were the next morning at 10; I was next at Magnolia Inn, leaving the next morning at 7 a.m. And then Mrs. Davis Daughter, was dropped I suppose and then Rowan. Now for what reason, I know not, but when Charles stopped at the Natchez, I did not get out of the car, - being a little jammed in, and so la Moore and her daughter dropped out, and went on, and the car went ahead, - and I never saw la Moore more, naturally, - leaving so early as I did on Wednesday morning. So I never did get to chat with her, save the general clatter of general conversation. I reckon she thinks, - or knows, I am a bag, which is alright. I certainly didn't mean to be rude, - but as it was 1 a.m., and it occurred to me she must be exhausted, - as certainly was I, after such a busy day, I just took it for granted that everyone wanted sleep, - and I got mine at least, but hope I didn't wound her too much by seeming indifference.

Well that is the main outline of my trip, although there is another point or two, and this in confidential. The Editor of the Press asked me to call. He said he was thinking of either increasing the newspaper's size, devoting himself exclusively to printing, and wanted me to be the Editor. That was Tuesday also, and I told him I should welcome a concrete proposal. Perhaps Thursday would be a time when he could work out all details and I would pass by. Knowing that I would not be in Natchez then, I thought it would be a good way to do, in order that I might write him a note requesting that he write me regarding details, - so that I might have them in writing. I don't know as anything can be done in that line, but it is nice to be offered the job, and we shall see how things will turn. I shall naturally keep you informed on that point, and of course I am not mentioning it here.

On Wednesday I came over to Alexandria, spent the afternoon with Mrs. David, sister of Miss Sally Hertzog, the latter living at Magnolia Plantation, down Cane River. Had a nice afternoon looking over her library, finding some Sarah Dorsey stuff but not much else of interest. Miss the train at 7 and so staid with Dr. and Mrs. Rand, and the latter brought me home late Thursday evening, and that's about all.

Found things here much as usual, with accent on the satisfaction that no one is here to threaten companionship and literary efforts of cooperation, save the Mistress. In the mean time, things will be cooking in Baton Rouge and Natchez, and perhaps I can afford to sit tight for a little.

I apologize for not mentioning before how much the details of the storm and other doings, which I enjoyed hearing about so much. This is a lop sided letter, but you will pardon its construction, knowing that I wanted to put you in line with all that goes on. More later.....

999

October 7th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

In this letter, you will find a note from Essie Mae which speaks for itself. You will kindly destroy it when I read.

I wrote her originally on Melrose stationery, which apparently she had not seen before.

In view of her plans to pass by here on the 23rd, and my desire to speak with her in Baton Rouge, - on two grounds, I think I shall head out for Natchez on the 13th, - which would be Friday, do what I can during the next few busy days, and then, following the conference on the 19th, head out for Baton Rouge on the 20th, - which also would be Friday, I think. That would give me a chance to do a couple of things in that city, and possibly catch a ride with her back here.

It is my understanding that she is coming to Melrose primarily to give the Editor of the Children's Literary Guild an eye full of a Louisiana plantation.

In view of the children's stories, - and illustrations, which Mr. P. and I have been formulating, it might be particularly advantageous to discuss them with that Editor while in Baton Rouge, as circumstances here might make it difficult to bring up the name of Mr. P.

At the same time, I should rather unroll my plans for the Department of Archives for the Library Commission in Baton Rouge, where there is a chance members of the Legislature or other State officials might be present so that the full glow of my enthusiasm might be spilled out before such a group, - right off the bat.

In the mean time, - if not before, - but probably while I am in Natchez, I shall have received the proposals of the Editor of the Press relative to a job with that set up, and I shall be able to turn them over in my mind before inaugurating my plan to the Baton Rouge crowd. That will be pleasant to have that matter up for consideration, too, - for two possibilities are better than one, and the most sought after one is the easiest accomplished sometimes, if a

1001

1002

The way things are shaping up now, I think I shall take off from here on Thursday of this week, - which would be about the 12th. That will give me a couple of days in Baton Rouge to explore the set up at the Library Commission before la C. returns from Chicago.

Then I think I shall run up to the Lesters in St. Francisville for a day, for cultivating that repository of a marvelous collection will do no harm in preparation for further designs I may have on it later in the season, should the job be put over.

Then I will go on to "atchez, giving me a couple of days there to round up the Trace business, - and particularly the status of the railroad tracks on the Bluffs, before the Governor arrives. With that out of the way, - but before that, I should mention that I am writing an outline or prospectus or some such thing, covering the proposed establishment of a Department of Archives for the Library Commission.

This I shall leave on Miss C.'s desk in Baton Rouge before she arrives, - and at the same I give a convincing although vague idea to one or two of her assistant, - who by having some idea of the scope of the project, - and I hope, favorably inclined, will say "Yes", when a day or two later, la C. will consult their opinions on such a project. That is quite important, it seems to me.

By having a terse summary of the project in writing, before she sees me, la C. will be acquainted with the proposition, although she will not have absorbed it as yet. I shall chat with her on generalities when I encounter her before leaving St. Francisville, and shall suggest that she and her guest, - that bag from the Junior Literary Guild, drive to Melrose via "atchez, picking me up there, and so returning to Melrose, - the three of us. That ought to have some points in its favor, I should think.

The matter which James refers to in his letter is the pep talk I gave la C. at St. Francisville, relative to the publicity idea, when we ran up to Miss Louise's during my recent visit. That might also be handled along with the Archives business, too, although I think I shall ask for a large salary for the Archives job in order that it will afford an opportunity to do some literary work on the side.

Please forgive the hodge-podge of this note, but I wanted to keep you informed. I should be back here about the 24th, and all mail will be held for me at the office.....

1003

Tuesday, October 20th.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:-

A succeeding dawn, finding me in the same place, with my thoughts beamed in the same direction as yesterday.

The post brought a report, - a lovely one, and I thank you with all my heart.

Definitely I leave for Baton Rouge on Friday, the 13th. On Saturday, - I will not arrive until 9 p.m. Friday. I shall whip a couple of things into shape, and plant my prospectus on la C.'s desk, in order that it may be in her hands when she arrives Monday, - she is actually scheduled to get back to town Sunday..

Then either late Monday, and I guess it will be then, - after seeing la C. right after lunch, I shall head up for Waverly plantation, and probably spend the night with the Lesters. Thence on to Natchez, - and you know the balance of the program.

I received a letter from Mrs. Walker yesterday, - she is Miss Kate's (Davis) daughter, in reference to the two iron trunks full of plantation material. Miss Kate is setting high store on going through a lot of these with me, - as I am with her, - letters, plans, plantation account books, inventories etc., etc., ad infinitum.

Then I shall have to utilize the services of the secretary of the Garden Club to assist me in plugging in some data regarding Garden Club expenditures on Bluff planting, which I expect to add to an article for the Democrat, already partially prepared. I want to run down to see Dr. Butler at Laurel Hill, too, and aside from the supper at Devereux, I think I haven't much more on my program, save the contacting of Mr. Martin for assistance, in the event that the Davis-Surget papers require some immediate transcription, and a round with Sister Rose and Sister Dolores at Burling Hill, - the old Chase Town house, to wangle some more data from them, and a couple of hours with Mrs. Florence Kelly, - not the Melrose Kelley, - but sister of old Miss Corinne Henderson, who has a lot of papers on Carmel Church, between Mantua and Woodstock plantations, - where Dr. Chase used to preach. And after that, I shall head out before daylight for home, and then put my ear to the ground and see if I can detect any shulnds coming out of the Library Commission.

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2001

1004

From la C.'s letter, already sent you, you will note that she plans to come to "elrose about the 23rd, and that will have given her a chance to absorb a little of the prospectus which she will then have had in hand for about a week.

Possessed as she is of great ability to hold down the Library Commission throughout the curious twists of State politics during the past 18 years, - a rare accomplishment, when one considers the changes from Huey Long to Sam Jones, - to mention but two, - and unique ability to get appropriations out of the Legislature, - I believe it was two or three hundred thousand at the last session, - yet in spite of these attainments, her understanding of complicated personal situations is vague. Therefore it was imperative that I acquaint one person with my proposed plan, before it was spilled here by la C. on her arrival.

My spilling seems to have been received with unbounded enthusiasm, and so we shall see what transpires next.

I enjoyed your account of your outing on Sunday on the occasion of the birthday. It was good to hear of the R.'s again, and to know that they are about. I always thought her very nice, and hope her good health has returned after these many years.

Your mention of heavy woollens recalls to mind that autumn must be really upon you, and I suppose the Sterling Forest region must by now, - or at least shortly, - be ablaze with color. I am sure Waldi liked the out of doors in not the coloring as much as anyone of the party, and if he keeps up his travel rate, there eventually ought to be a parallel, if not a duplicate in mileage of one Fallaha, - I know not how to spell it. But I have heard the latter's name several times and seen the book about him. Two or three weeks ago, at Devereux, I heard his master broadcast his speech, having much to do about his dog, and I liked it, and I laughed. I often think that if a nation can really laugh at or with a politician about his dog, things are rocking along in the right direction.

I appreciate your thoughtfulness in reminding me or rather advising me of the extension of postal service in various sections. I shall eventually make use of it, and in the mean time pray that the zones may be further expanded so that we may before long write to those from whom we have been denied news for such a long time.

I, too, sometimes wonder about Madine. Somehow she takes on some kind of an inter-ocean Evangeline role in my mind. It was a great pity that under the strain of things, these two or three years ago, she so flew off the handle as to deny herself to contacts of two or three people whom, I suppose, were about as kindly disposed toward her as she will ever know.

1005

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2001

"another person, - aside from those we once knew in business, - particularly the Browser department, I also think of the wife of a youth, - (interruption) - the wife being an artist. Somehow the feeling that she never quite knew what the world was all about, moving through it like an Alice au pays des merveilles makes me wonder what in the world she must make of all the doings which must have been going on around her during the past several years. It is certainly going to take us a while to get all the former personalities, - so long cut off from the world, back straight in our minds.

During the past years I have studiously avoid mention of thoughts along these lines, for somehow failing to express them somehow made them weigh a little lighter. But now with things seeming to approach a conclusion, I think one can begin contemplating such subjects, just as one may think of breakfast with a lot more of anticipation when dawn seems actually in sight.

You mention your pleasure in receiving the photos from Mr. P., including the one of the Pepia "inderilla. I am glad you have these, and I shall do what I can shortly to see if your request for another may not be supplied. Frankly I can't recall exactly when last I was "struck", - as the darkies say. It seems to me a month back, while at Charles "azurette's, one was "struck". I shall ask Charles about this when next I see him. He usually takes quite good photos, I think, and if there is one, I shall see about getting it going. As I usually see him on Sunday only, it will be about three of them before I get out toward Little River Farm, I think, but I shall not forget about it.

I realize I have written a great deal about the prospectus for the Library Commission, but what with the several attempts I have made to get down on paper all the main points for the prospectus, I cannot recall if I have touched upon all the innate possibilities of the plan in my letters. It is so strange how mentally we carry on so many endless conversations with those we love that when it gets right down to saying what has been written and what merely expressed in thought, it is difficult to say. I shall accordingly run the risk of repetition, - and if I do repeat, perhaps you won't mind going over some of the points a second time.

In order to make the proposition palatable to both Miss C. and to the politicians, it is imperative that the contemporary angle of the thing be stressed, - the compilation of day to day data. In reality, the real plan is for Archives almost exclusively, but Archives is a word that must not be mentioned, first because there may be an Archives Department under State auspices, - although no one I know seems to be sure, but it may be somehow merged or snagged up or bogged down with the Louisiana State University Archives. And secondly,

1001

1006

politicians, - nor la C., - are much interested, if at all, in old documents. Therefore, since they are the object of the whole project, you may readily understand how rather softly one must walk to slip in an Archives Department without everyone concerned being conscious of it.

In a flare of enthusiasm for the plan, the Madam threatened to give all her scrapbooks to the Commission through me, although that is subject to a lot of varying circumstances, and is not to be relied upon, - although it is indicative of her position at the moment. Naturally that is all to the good, since she will tend to press that point on la C. when she visits here, - and probably by mail, - and la C. somehow takes for gospel a lot of stuff coming from that source.

Once the plan is accepted, then it will develop, - as a matter of course, - although supposedly just come to mind, that the micro-filming of much precious material, not available for housing in the Commission, will be necessary, and therefore a car and micro-filming paraphernalia must be added, with proper aides. As the results of the campaign for accumulation comes to hand, it will be necessary to create a staff for proper handling of the material, - and eventually, before anyone realizes it, a whole section, or a Department, possibly quasi-independent of the Commission itself, will arise from the place where originally it started out as a one man innovation.

I set high store on the micro-filming section of the Department, since it seems to me that immediately after the war, when film becomes available, the libraries of the Nation, - the world, will be enormously enhanced in the extent of their data through this medium, which, as you know, was just about at the point of inception, immediately before hostilities got going good.

I take it as a matter of course, - and I assume this idea may be original, since it occurred to me at this moment, that micro-film in color is but a step away, and accordingly Libraries throughout the Nation will eventually find themselves possessed of reproductions for the screen of illustrations in color from books, but at the same time additional photographs relating to subjects in un-or non-illustrated books. I think that a whole new vista of library service may be held in that thought, although it must be broken down, explored, developed and adjusted before one can say so for sure.

Oh, word, in what an age we live! It is sure going to be nice having a hand in all this, especially if there be a little place hidden away in some moss draped oaks, with only darkies for neighbors where one can draw from the quiet and the stars a clearer vision of the shape of things to come.....

1007

1001

Thursday, October 12th.
Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I hope I am not bombarding you with too many letters in a row. I don't want to do that, but what with the spread of the next 8 or 10 days when I shall be beyond the reach of a machine, I somehow want to make the most of the present proximity to one before taking off on Friday.

I received the enclosed note in yesterday's mail. It is of no particular interest, but I thought it would help to keep you up on things, and so I send it along. You might destroy it after reading. I am writing a response this morning, making an appointment for next Wednesday morning, when we shall see what we shall see. In the mean time, I am hoping my prospectus will be cooking in Baton Rouge, and on Sunday, in contacting la bag, - Sunday, the 22nd, I shall be in a better position to give a decision to The Press.

Without knowing the salary possible in either job, I think of a choice in this manner. The State job would likely to run on for ever so long with a definite salary, with possible increases. It would give me time out for concentrating on writing on Louisiana and Mississippi stuff, and that writing, - if sold, might add to the income. A third advantage would be that it would give me an opportunity to keep in touch with a lot of people, and I might live in either state, according to preference and circumstances. The newspaper thing would not permit these choices, and at the same time would probably be a full time business, with income subject to fluctuations of half a dozen circumstances. Were the two propositions, as they develop, reach a balance in financial return, it would seem to me advantageous to favor the State job. But they will not come into perfect balance, - even should a choice be permitted, and so I shall have to decide, after mature reflection. Obviously, I shall not give a definite Yes or No to Mr. MacDonald at the time of our conference, but shall say that I shall have to weigh the matter before coming to a definite decision. That will give the State thing a chance to crystallize before I jump one way or the other. No one here, - or in Baton Rouge, knows anything about the Press offer, and naturally I am not mentioning it.

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7001

1008

A letter from Nellie Wailes Brandon in yesterday's mail, indicating that she is back in Natchez, says that she is heading out in this direction shortly. I shall write her this morning, indicating that I shall be in Natchez on Monday or Tuesday, and suggesting that if she should come here before my return, she should plan to remain until after I get back. She is marvelous at 80, and a perfect store house of interesting and valuable information..

Of local doings, I must tell you about an episode occurring on Little River on Monday. It seems that Charles Mazurette sent a servant to Melrose, traveling the 5 miles in Charles' somewhat dilapidated buggy. About one trip a week up to Cane River is the extent of exercise Charles' horse gets. On the way home, the bridle broke, and Dolly, the horse, decided to make a run for her. She tore herself free from the buggy, pitched the servant out on his shoulder, wrecked the frame of the buggy, smashed off a couple of wheels, mashed up the kerosene can and other items being transported to Little River Farm, and generally put poor Mr. Charlie's locomotive agency out of commission. I asked the darkier, aboard the ill fated craft, what Mr. Charlie said, since he has no other means at the moment of transporting his supplied:

"Well, Mr. Charlie say he sure did hate for the buggy to be done mashed up so, but he jus' figured it couldn't be hoped".

I like "hope" being the past tense for "help".

According to the Natchez Democrat, Governor Bailey is to be accompanied by Senator Bilbo on his Natchez visit on the 19th. I have been planning that the Governor would be alone with me for three hours at Devereux on that evening, - as between 3 or rather 5 o'clock and 8. It would be easy enough to rattle the railroad tracks on the bluff before a mere Governor, but I may, like Mr. Roosevelt, find I have a lap full, if old Bilbo sneaks in, too. But if the Senator does turn up, I shall be prepared to direct my recommendations along lines the Senator usually follows in his campaign speeches, and if I can in a few minutes get him on my side in the business at hand, perhaps what picture for the Governor's consideration will be that much more lurid.

I reckon you might get braced for a heavy report on my return. It looks like there might be a lot of subject to cover and quite a few details of varying interest to be settled down.

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Tuesday Quite Early.

Memorandum For Chipping Service:

I hasten, - and yet feel I should almost hesitate, - to say that it looks as though the idea is taking hold alright.

I conferred in Baton Rouge with la belle C., handed her the prospectus for consideration, and so departed, leaving her up to her neck in dinners, teas, etc., for Miss Ferris, - of the Junior Literary Guild.

I returned here Monday evening about 4. After the ladies had been in South Louisiana since I had seen Miss C., they reached here a couple of hours after I arrived.

Last night until nearly 11, they spent their time with me alone in this house. We canvassed the situation thoroughly. La belle C. is sold on the idea alright. There are difficulties facing the thing, but I believe these can be readily ironed out. The first of these is a law passed by the last Legislature, freezing all fund of the Commission for any purpose, save what they were being spent for at the time the legislation went through. This is very inconvenient for several of the State Departments, unable, as they are, to anticipate in advance, what needs may arise.

The Legislature meets in November, and it is expected that this law will be removed or so amended as to give considerable lee way in disbursements. If I can make it to Baton Rouge in November at the time the Legislature meets, I shall jog everyone who has anything to do with the business.

Once the law is removed, there is the question of housing this new type of material. A new building for the Commission is in the offing, but that will take time to house. Some people say, - and Miss C. agrees, that it is easier to get housing facilities when you have something to house rather than before you have anything. And so I think, once the legal aspects are adjusted, the thing will start operation without delay.

I think the thing will be styled: Department of Documents and Records. That will avoid any archives suggestions. At first I shall tie up with the Commission as its representative in charge of the acquisitions. When some are gathered together, the whole framework of the Department and personnel will be developed along lines already indicated.

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I go into these details in order that you may know just how things are rocking.

Now, - as I would have done first, I must say thanks again to you for making possible the good use to which was put your recent report. Twenty five times more was accomplished than would have been otherwise, - which would not have been accomplished.

I was delighted to have your kind letter in Baton Rouge, together with notices as to how the wind blows from this direction. These have been, - or will be, - returned by our mutual friend.

I did some business in Baton Rouge, aside from the Commission angle. From there I went to St. Francisville and said alnight (all night) with the George Lester's at Waverly. It was withal pleasant, and I believe quite profitable. Mr. L. is a member of the Board of the Commission, and being a great collector, he and I hit it off fine. I learned he was interested in doing an article on ante bellum education. I could tell him of some uncirculated letters and other particulars from or in the files of Howard Memorial Library in New Orleans, and in Natchez, I was able to dig up some important data on the same subject, - which I promptly forwarded to him. He will like all that, and when La C. passed by there on Thursday, should she mention the other business of housing the records, he will be quite sympathetic, I am sure.

Mrs. Lester does beautiful reproductions of Audubon's prints, and we had a good chat while she labored. He is giving me some original publications of the Colonization Society, about 1834, I think. These will be nice, too.

At Natchez, - on Wednesday, Miss Myra called me to ask me to the Sola Hotel roof on Thursday at 12, as guest of the Natchez Trace Society. Ungraciously, I said, - without thinking, -

"Oh, Lord, must I?", -

and then told her frankly that I would not come. I couldn't see four hours of speech making by a dozen politicians, and I didn't go.

But I was at Devereux at 7 p.m. for the dinner. I was the only person from Natchez, - sounds as though I were a citizen, - invited in the male department. The Governor, as though by remote control, when he arrived, came over and joined me on a sofa in the living room. We went to town immediately, and I believe I got the wheels going on the railroad track. He was very kind, and we hit it off very well.

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of the family papers of the Young's. The youngs lived at Beaupre plantation, next to Laurel Hill. You will recall that it was Cousin Eliza Young who was a member of the Mercer household so long. It had come to the Youngs through Aunt Jane Ellis Rapalja, who built the Mercer town house in Natchez. Cousin Eliza's nephew it was who kept the family Bible, and years after his death, it was discovered that in the vital statistics department, where figured his distinguished ancestors, he had also written down his colored off spring. Well, anyhow, all their family papers are in a private home in Tensas Parish. There is something to start in on for the State.

I called on Dr. Butler after sundown on Friday with Roan and two other friends. We found the old man in rare form. I think he had had a pretty strong toddy just before we blew in unexpectedly.

During my absence from this place, one of my favorite colored friends, while on horseback, had the misfortune to get a Black Widow in his shoe, - it apparently having swished off some tall grass. None had been seen around here that I know of up to that time. Within a couple of hours, the boy was out of his head, but fortunately was averted by a belated shot of anti-toxin.

There is more to be told, but I reckon I had better get this out of the machine and attend to a couple dusky friends who have come by for me to assist in writing letters for them before the gin gets going.

Afton Villa, I must remark in passing, has been sold, - \$55,000.00 being the price. There are certain mis-givings on every side, fearing that it may be turned into a night club or some such, since the purchasers are obviously people with no money, - having kept a small town country grocery up to the purchase of the villa. It is assumed they are merely acting for other persons in acquiring it.

I haven't been to the store to see about my mail, but shall do so this morning, for I know I must have several letters from around the State, and I shall speak of these in my next.

Somehow, during my entire trip I was thinking of the Clipping Service in whose name, somehow, the thing seemed to be made. I shall write of other details in my next, but until then, may I say thanks again.....

I, Francis Mignon, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the original manuscript as it appears in the original manuscript.

1101

1012

Dinner was delightful. It was to be followed by a reception at Choctaw at 8 o'clock. When we were about 2 courses from the end of dinner, I glanced at my watch and saw that instead of being almost 8, it was then 20 minutes of 10. We were late for the reception.

I drove in to Choctaw with Miss Myra. From there we went on to a rather large party at Roane's (Mrs. Ferriday Byrnes). But Miss Myra and I merely made a round. The Governor laughed when he greeted me again saying:

Every where I turn, those railroad tracks insist on keeping just two jumps behind me! "

Having promised to put Mrs. Brandon on the bus the following morning, I wanted to get to bed fairly early, and so I was folded up by 11:30. I awoke at 5:30, and went to Miss Nellie's house, and so headed her out for here, and of course found her awaiting my arrival when I got home yesterday.

Other things in Natchez turned out alright. I wasn't too entranced with the proposition made by the Press. - turning over the editorship and adve tising to me, with him acting as publisher exclusively. The fly in the ointment is that he hasn't any money, and without sufficient capital, it would be difficult to do anything at the present time. I shall string the matter along without giving a definite answer, - at least for a while.

Bilbo, as a personality, turned out to be rather different from what I had expected. He has a greater sense of humor than I had imagined. Surely he is clever, and knows how to dish it out, but nevertheless is a dreadful bag.

He said that at a r cent dinner in New Orleans, an alarm clock was offered to the person present who would tell the biggest lie. He said he was determined to have the clock. After the other speakers were done with their tall tales, he got up and declared that Dewey would win the current contest with an overwhelming majority. Everyone roared and Bilbo walked off with the time piece.

I had an evening with Audley Conner and his wife, - the former being the Adams County Sheriff. It was pleasant, and I had much news of impending business in town. It looks as though, - at long last, Mr. and Mrs. Goat would be removed from their famous Castle, - and I hope so, before it is completely ruined. Audley says he is trying to get Miss Maude Stanton to take them in at Windy Hill. That would be something. I doubt if that works.

At Mrs. Ayres and Miss Corinne Henderson's, - Melmont, I met their sister, living in the upper part of the State. From the latter, I learned much about local doings, in her locality, and discovered the location, - across the River in Tensas Parish,

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1101

October 26th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Thanks a million for the clippings which were hear when I arrived, but which I did not get to investigate until after filing my first report. The one on the Natchez Trace meeting was nice to have, and the one on the statement of ownership was most valuable to me, and I thank you again. Backed up by its information, I may, in writing to Mr. MacDonald today, point out that his offer, under present circumstances, does not warrant acceptance at the present time, and possibly we may discuss the matter of stock transfer eventually. I shall write my letter, following this report, and accordingly you may appreciate how timely the clipping came to hand.

How odd about Fabulous 52! Isn't it amazing how things can go into an eclipse and then emerge again? If you haven't already written James about it, I would suggest that you just go ahead and submit it to another house, - possibly Viking, if the adult department would care to consider it. If you have written James about it already, that is of course alright too. I am under the impression that the item would have greater sales as an adult book than as a child's book, and I think the straight playing card illustrations would have wider appeal than Clemence's folk lore touch.

As for the ladies who were visiting here, they departed Wednesday morning early. Thinking she might disturb me, the Madam did not call me, - I reckon it was 8 a.m., and she thought I might be writing. I should liked to have seen them, but perhaps it is as well to let them trail off in the manner they did.

Certainly la belle G. has enough to think about regarding the matter. Her great asset, - and she is supreme in that particular bracket, is her ability to manage the legislation that requires enactment from time to time. Aside from that she is a little slow mentally to grasp more subtle ideas. The Madam says that even yet la belle G. doesn't grasp the import of the idea, and its value to her department. But she has left with plenty to think ab ut, what with what I dinged into her, what the Madam had to observe, and what her companion in this trip had to say. At the moment, I haven't the slightest idea but what new wheels will start turning almost immediately, by way of preperation, and early

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in November when the legislature assembles, I shall make every effort to prod her in person to submit the appropriate amendments.

The whole engineering problem of putting the thing over is so delicate, - fraught with opposition on a dozen fronts should the grand scale of the thing be dreamed of. And that ~~XXXXXXXX~~ covers practically everyone concerned with the initial stages, - locally and in Baton Rouge, - and a more remote congregation, as the general framework in due time becomes obvious.

The important and paramount thing is that a grand job can be done for the State. But it must not start off as a new undertaking, but quietly gotten under way as a mere job of gathering up a few things for the Commission. Strangely enough, this idea must be the only one in the minds of everyone concerned, including la Devigne, for were the real scope of the project apparent, every effort would be made to scuttle it. Strange how seemingly generous people can be up to the point that their generosity doesn't approach emancipation.

In the case of la belle U., - she mustn't know the true and ultimate measures, since they would be too great for her, they would be endangered, too, were she to spill the plans, which she might readily do, to three or four different people, - Davis, Stanley Arthur, Fritchard, etc., - all heads of departments of a similar kind, - and all of whom would want to grab the job, or start a racket against something which might eventually eclipse their several departments.

And so I tread a very delicate tight rope, pushing hard enough to make an impression, but moving softly enough not to arouse the real merit of the plan.

At the moment it would seem possibly best to become attached to the Commission as some sort of a collector, and that is all. Shortly I shall have amassed such an imposing pile of stuff for the State that it will be figured as of more importance than originally anticipated. Then I shall ask for status as head of the section, and eventually, if I am good enough, I shall ask for independent status of any of the other branches. This will not be too easy, but it will be worth it, and I shall drive with all the force within me to get it across. And aside from the personal satisfaction of doing a good job, there will be the larger satisfaction of knowing the State will profit mightily by those efforts.

Curious news from a couple of sources comes from Old Man River. He is in the hospital as an alcoholic at the

1015

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moment. Sister has been down to see him and staid in his apartment, - which would kill him if he knew it. Miss Alberta seems to have taken full charge, which would also kill him if he knew it. She is so dizzy, she can easily make a bigger mess out of almost anything, - and do it as stupidly as a cow might kick over a pail of milk.

It is said he will remain in the hospital three or four weeks. Sister wants ~~xx~~ him brought here. The Madam does not. However it works out, I shall try to turn it to advantage.

Someone sent a clipping from the Shreveport Times yesterday which reported the Internal Revenue Department is suing Lyle for 4000 odd dollars for back income tax. I think he has heavily mortgaged his house. It is doubtful if he will ever be able to write again, - if he survives. Heaven alone knows how the whole thing will turn out.

In the event he should come here, I think it will not be for long, - although it may. But one advantage might be that while I am in the road, there will be plenty to take up one's mind during my absence. And so things turn.

Miss Nellie (Mrs. Nellie Wailes Brandon) remains here until tomorrow I have had some good chats with her during the past 24 hours. I have learned much of the historic past, and we have dwelt quite a lot on the one time B. L. C. Wailes property in Washington, Miss. Should things turn nicely, that 40 acre property might eventually be brought into focus as an eventual possibility as a dwelling place. That, of course, is something for the far distant future, but it is pleasant to contemplate, - just as are lots of things, including a prospect of Heaven.

Time is approaching for the post, and so I shall have to break off at this point. I enclose a letter of no especial interest, but thought you might enjoy seeing the writer's hand. He is marvelous, sitting way off there alone in remote and elegant Laurel Hill. Did I tell you I ran down to see him with Roane after dark last Friday. There was a little moon shining through the trees as we drove the 2 or 3 miles from the main highway of the Lower Woodville Road along through the private plantation road up to the house. A marvelous man with a marvelous brain, and what a most excellent person! Don't bother to return the letter.

1016

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October 31st at Melrose.

Report to Clipping Service:

Because of enclosures, I shall keep this report to a single page. The letter from la bag, addressed to me, is typical of the mind which obviously takes a time to grasp the value of the Division of Documents and Records. I have made a duplicate of my response to her letter which I enclose herewith, in order that you may keep abreast with things.

The British book, as mentioned in my letter to her, is to hand, although I thought it might be more effective to make it appear as not as yet absolutely secured. That will provide something to angle for on the part of the new Division.

Only Mrs. Brandon and I know of this book's existence. I acquired it in Natchez in the settlement of an estate this last Spring, and held it until someone like "ellie Wailles could turn through it with me. It really is a remarkable item, - not so much for anything, save that it gives the names of people in the 1770's, and is the only record extant, so far as is known. The official British papers when removed from Natchez, - following the capture of that place in 1779, were probably removed to Pensacola, and thence of Havana, and possibly to Saragossa in Spain, and have subsequently been destroyed, I believe in the revolution of late, - the Franco business about 1936 or 1937. Everything in the Natchez records dates from the Spanish era, and seems to have gotten under way about 1780 or 1781, but this old private account book gets the jump on that date, and a lot of families of Mississippi and Louisiana will be surprised and gratified to find their fore-bearers in this region earlier than had ever been established heretofore.

Mrs. Brandon and I have turned through but two or three of the couple of hundred pages. In this slight glance we find a transaction, whereby John Alston is credited with 700 odd deer skins. He was of the Alston family in South Carolina into which Theodosia Burr married. John Alston also figured in an abortive uprising in Natchez in the mid 1780's when an attempt was made to throw out the Spanish in favor of a return of the British.

Mrs. Brandon returned to Natchez yesterday, and I sent the book along with her. Loving such business, she will arrange the pages in correct order and make some sort of an index. Eventually I shall try to have the thing transcribed, when the index can be bound with the complete transcription, and then the volume itself can be turned over to whatever agency, - I hope the Division of Documents and Records.

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1017

I did not mention in my letter, - duplicate enclosed, - of a book from her which arrived in second class mail, along with her letter. I shall assume the book came in the following mail, and that will give me an opportunity to write her a second letter on the morrow, thanking her for thinking of me

A member of the Legislature, living in this Parish, lives up the road a ways. I know him slightly, and shall make it a point to ride up that way one day this week and indulge in a little political fence-building. At the same time, I shall find out precisely when the Legislature meets, with a view to stirring things with a stick at that time.

A letter from Barnett Lane indicates that he will be spending Thanksgiving Day, and the day preceeding, at Melrose. I want to be here at that time if possible. Things certainly got out of hand during his last visit, and if he can be here during his next, I may be able to keep the boat from rocking quite so violently.

Word from Old Man River is contradictory at best. Miss Alberta is such a panic one can believe little or nothing of her understanding of things, and she is about the only one who supplies particulars, although Adam C. goes or has gone to the Crescent City, and there may be a report from that point. According to the latest Alberta report, Lyle is ever so much better, although still in the hospital, has made up his mind never to drink again, etc., etc., etc., - all of which is not news, as we have so often heard the same thing. According to Miss Alberta, Lyle has a job awaiting him, expects a check from the publishers on the 2nd of November, and the Federal Income Tax gatherer has consented to delay action for the 500 arrears until the middle of November. Miss Alberta says if he will only come to Melrose and stay for a couple of months, - away from his friends "evil friends", - I believe is her expression, who entice him to drink, he will be a new man. All of which is sheer baloney, of course, and as for people "enticing" him to drink, that is certainly stretching the imagination beyond endurance.

I think, - possibly based on hope, - that he will not come to Melrose, for being a dry Parish, "atchitoches oozes with liquor, and since he will be tremendously bored here, I think liquor will flow more madly than ever. Then, too, today's Melrose is not precisely the Melrose he knew 20 years ago, and I can see no advantage to him or his hostess in such an arrangement. One thing is most certain, - should he come, - he will most certainly find a lot of time on his hands without the charm of my presence.

I must break off at this point and get this note headed down the lane. I apologize for its general dumbness, and suggest that it be destroyed promptly. I do not care to have the enclosures returned. I shall be getting a slightly more personal report off shortly.....

1018

Meade Villa
1018

November 3rd, 1901

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Reports from the North and East indicate cold weather in those localities, and I am hoping low thermometer readings haven't brought poor health along with them. I have no doubt that pressure of business, - I hope it is that, - has prevented some dispatch in clippings following a couple of Memoranda forwarded from here during the past two weeks. At the moment I am a little depressed because of uncertainty as to how things may be turning, but shortly a ray of sunshine will appear and I shall be re-assured.

Reports from Old Man River continue to fluctuate as usual. At the moment he is in the hospital. Some of his friends say he will be out within a week or so, and they feel a long rest in the country will be the only thing for him. Those thoughts are not subscribed to by anyone in these parts. We shall see what we shall see.

The articles I have been running weekly in the Democrat continue to appear, - all devoted to the Bluffs. In last Sunday's issue, a news item adjoined one of these articles. It indicated that representatives of the Federal Government and the Trace Association would visit "atchez this coming week end, with a view of making a survey of the Bluffs in the neighborhood of Connelly's Tavern, where a terminus of the "atchez Trace is planned. Obviously the efforts being made, both privately and through the press to eradicate the railroad tracks and sweep the Bluffs clean is bearing fruit. The articles appear unsigned, which is the way I wanted them to do, for without signature they seem to give the greater impression that the shouting for an extension of the park along the Bluffs is merely a civic desire and not the pet design of an individual.

With both my radio and reading machine out of commission during the past number of weeks, I have been getting behind on my current events and my literature, but both machines will be put in order again shortly, - as soon as tubes are available, and then I shall get caught up a little. On Tuesday night, - the 7th, I shall fold up as is my custom, however, feeling quite certain as to what the results of the Nation's poll will be. I have often thought during the past years how pleasant it is to find one's self in accord with much that has been undertaken, for somehow those who seem to have found no good in the vast doings appear to be so miserable when ever anyone of the family, currently representing the nation is mentioned.

1019

During Mrs. Brandon's visit, - which was at the same time as that of the ladies from Baton Rouge, we have scanned the future with long range telescopes, and for long glimpses, have trained them pretty consecutively on Meade Villa in Washington, Miss. I reckon you may recall reading of that property over and over again in Sydnor's Gentleman of the Old Natchez Trace, given me by a friend some five or six years ago. There Meade Villa gets quite a bit of space, and for Mrs. Brandon who was born in the house, it is a great pleasure to talk about it, and wonder how it will fare in the years to come.

I believe, - am sure, - that the plot contains 39 acres, with another acre, included, for the graveyard. In an estate transfer in 1808, reference is made to the buildings on the property, but it is assumed that the house was actually erected in Spanish times, - probably about 1795 when Connelly's Tavern was built, since many feature of the house, and most especially the fireplaces, appear to be identical. The next time I go to Natchez, Mrs. Brandon wants to run out to Washington on the bus with me, taking old Mr. Gerard Brandon along with us, so that we can walk about the property a bit, while Miss Nellie and Mr. Gerard recall where many of the original out buildings were situated, - the slave quarters, kitchen, storehouse, etc., etc.

The last time the property changed hands, - about 10 or 15 years ago, it sold for \$2,500.00. After the present flurry over oil has died down, its value will probably be placed at not more than \$3,500.00. It is a modest place, but convenient and historic, and as the number of available ante bellum houses in the vicinity become less and less available, it will no doubt be more and more highly prized.

Should the Commission Division be established and successful, it is certainly pleasant to think about Meade Villa and its possibilities.

From the days of B. L. C. to recently, there were two little buildings flanking the main house, - the one on the right occupied by Miss Sue C. Covington and B. L. C.'s daughter, Feliciania. The balancing unit, - on the left side of the house, was B. L. C.'s Cabinet and library. As this has been removed, it would have to be put back. I always like this kind of an arrangement in ante bellum houses, however, as they always made possible a pleasant degree of privacy, since each unit might be complete in itself, yet close by the main structure.

I apologize for rattling along at such a great rate about a subject that can at best be but of slight interest, and yet eventually you will examine all these properties, and perhaps will find something in them, too.....

1020

Memorandum to Clipping Service: at Natchez, Miss.

Were I to attempt 20 times 20 million to say how pleased I was to have a report in yesterday's mail, I should still not half covered the case.

The report has been put aside to be gone into later this morning when the rain has ceased and the deep murky sky has lifted a bit. But the several reports are checked over and all is in order, although I shall not run through the printed material until about the time the post leaves this morning, and so I merely write this note to acknowledge the same, and to thank you from a thousand angles, not the least being the little worry which be-clouded my report of yesterday. Now I feel that the flow of correspondence is going through nicely and that your own good health permits you to take clippings well within your stride. Then, too, there is the assurance that Baton Rouge may be available at any moment the iron seems sufficiently hot to strike at it, and all because of feelings that cannot be covered in correspondence.

As I have surveyed the various newspapers of the past century and a half, selecting one paragraph here and another there, I notice that the completed column gives an impression that somehow mirrors the times, although frequently by selecting particular items to be included, the column can easily be lopsided in its recordings.

A case in point might be easily set up in any newspaper at any time, and I am thinking of two items appearing in the press during the past week in these parts which are certainly a commentary, - although not a true barometer, of the times in which we live.

One item I heard discussed thoroughly by two officials in Natchez during my last visit. It seems a kind old darkie, living in Amite County, (south Mississippi) I believe, had long owned a few acres there, raised a family, and had been popular with his neighbors, and revered by his parishoners, - for he was a preacher. Some white men in the locality, hearing that oil was being drilled for in that general region, called upon the old darkie to sell his acres to them. He demurred, saying that his place was the only home he had ever known, and that we was contented to live and

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1021

die there. That night, the men came back, took the old darkie and his son down the road, shot the old man to death and cut out his tongue, telling his son to keep walking or he would meet a similar fate. But there plans didn't follow through, and they were caught, and it was the wish of those white officials with whom I talked that these outrageous white men should be punished severely. I suppose they were hill billies, for there is where the troubles usually originate, as between colored and white in the South. I shall follow the case with interest, and speak of it again. Most darkies are ~~afraid~~ afraid to go into the hilly sections of the South, for only poor white trash live there, - by and large, - and their ignorance, stupidity and economic fear of the colored man somehow always seems to fire them with a desire to ride rough shod over the darkie. As has often been remarked in the past, it isn't so much the colored problem as the white problem that ought to excite the concern of law abiding citizens.

Another excerpt from a local newspaper is in a lighter vein. Last week, Caroline's sister, Virginia, took a local judge apart, in an open letter to a "atchitoches paper, for recommending Dewey to the favorable consideration of the voters. Yesterday, a bag by the name of "ongridge living somewhere in the "arish, responded, - so she said, - in an open letter to the paper. Her point was this: - She objected to Mr. Roosevelt referring to God in public addresses, at the same time complaining that he never mentioned the Prince of Peace. She pointed out that Clare Booth Luce, however, had come nearer to doing so, by quoting from the sermon on the Mount. Therefore, since the man to be elected on Tuesday would have to play the role of peace-maker, she must of necessity vote for a member of the party to which Clare Booth Luce belonged. If that isn't marvelous reasoning and a manifestation of superior intellect, then I give up.

I wish I had Virginia by the ear, for I would make her write another letter to the newspaper, saying precisely this: "Dear Mr. Editor: - Relative to Miss Longridge's letter, well, I'll be damned. Positively, Virginia "ormon Miller."

Newspapers certainly reflect the times, but thank heaven not all the people are so thick as some who get into print.

This must be all for the moment. I merely wanted to get this going to acknowledge the safe arrival of the report and to express my gratitude and thanksgiving. More shortly....

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Since yesterday was a "essential day in the history of the South, I thought I would write a few lines to you. I have been thinking of you a great deal lately, and I hope you are well. I have been thinking of you a great deal lately, and I hope you are well. I have been thinking of you a great deal lately, and I hope you are well.

Election Day.

Memorandum to Clipping Service: have, if possible, find out if the "atchitoches paper has any more of the "atchitoches paper. I have been thinking of you a great deal lately, and I hope you are well. I have been thinking of you a great deal lately, and I hope you are well.

It was good to have the last report over the week end. My thanks again, - 20 million times over. Somehow both the report and the clippings form a guarantee and an inspiration to keep the efforts at white hot heat, and I need scarcely assure you that every ounce of energy will be expended in the direction already dwelt upon at some length in former communications.

The enclosures are of no especial interest, but I send them along to let you keep abreast of things in "atchez. You may dispose of them as you please. I do not want them back. The letter from the "resident of the Garden Club mentions certain notices in the "emocrat. I enclose the clippings also, - and I do not want them back either. In setting up the article on the Bluffs, the paper certainly messed the thing up considerably. I notice where it should read "Iron Horse", it reads "one horse", making no sense at all, but possibly the final paragraphs may convey the idea to the politicians that the newspaper is reflecting the wants of the public, - which will assist in part in effecting the removal of the railroad tracks, - which is primarily what I want, with a secondary wish that the Garden Club be named agent for planting the remained of the "luff when it is returned to the people.

A letter from "arnett "ane yesterday asked me if I could put over a speaking date for him in "atchez on the Monday or Tuesday prior to "hanksgiving, when he will come here. I could. As he is speaking in "erriday, - 18 miles across the Mississippi from "atchez on one of those days, he could easily make a date for a "atchez talk directly. Accordingly I welcome this opportunity to render him a service, particularly as I shall turn the matter over to the Stanton Hall crowd, where he will address a group more possessed of money than graces, and by getting him tangled up with that crowd, I shall keep him from associating too intimately with our side. Then, too, by asking me to accomplish this date for him, I am able to write confidentially to Miss "yra "mith to so arrange the schedule that he will speak in "atchez, just prior to his appearance in "erriday, and as the later place is between "atchez and Melrose, his time in "atchez will accordingly be outshort to carry out the "erriday appointment. Yes, I am delighted to handle the matter for him, and little will he ever know why. I think he had no more than one third part in the explosion which occurred

(over)

1023

SS01

here in July, and therefore in all fairness, I can scarcely hold him entirely responsible for my loss of a collaborator, but because he did play a part, - even though the role was minor, I naturally find that thought constantly re-curring in the back of my mind. My strength, so far as he is concerned, however, must ever lie in his uncertainty as to how much I do know, and I shall see to it that he never gets a chance to learn anything.

Save for the one big project in mind, I am able to do but little in other fields, but the big project is so terribly important in some hundred different concepts, that I gladly give all my time to it, even though other things could be done at the same time, had I any one to work with.

Houghton Mifflin has politely said No. to the Old Louisiana Scrapbook, but took the trouble to point out a lot of its virtues. Their position was that the material is of local appeal, - not national. We accordingly shall submit it to Louisiana State University Press. If this isn't a good idea, it is the best I know of at the moment. In a way it serves a good purpose at the moment anyway, for it gives me an excuse to write Essae Mae, asking her for aid in contacting someone she may know personally in L. S. U. Press. This will offer a good excuse for writing her more frequently than otherwise, and with each letter, - on the manuscript matter, I can toss in a paragraph on the Department of Documents. Another advantage, - were L. S. U. Press, to publish the thing, would be the fact that it might have a more concentrated spread over Louisiana, and more space would be available to particulars regarding the publication in local newspapers. That would put the names of the authors up into print at about the time the Department of Documents was getting under way in Baton Rouge, and so might nicely dove-tail on the minds of the Legislature, etc. A third advantage, - but unimportant, would be that if accepted, the Old Louisiana Scrapbook might the more readily open a door for the Old Natchez Scrapbook, - and so the thing may or may not turn. In any event it is worth the try.

Because of the amount of enclosures, I shall keep this report to a single page, although I could write dozens. The thin uppermost in my mind is the vast avenues which are likely to open up if and when the Department of Documents is established. Then there will naturally develop one or another type of very pleasant prospect, congenial labor and the opportunity of bringing sympathetic view points together. Naturally the thought of a "parfait secretaire" is the single accompaniment of this whole Department of Documents idea. Patience is a virtue to be exercised thoroughly, where so many ponderous things depend from ceilings which must be reached for as one moves from room to room in approaching the ultimate goal. But although impatience is bound to harrie one at times, still the ultimate satisfaction, - the sheer joy of contemplating what may be realized if one has the patience to carry one is so great that one can easily bank all on such a possibility.....

1024

Meade Villa

Saturday at Melrose.

Report to Clipping Service:

The air mail report to hand, and I am as happy as a clam to know that all goes well. It was silly of me to express concern in a recent letter. The change in the season, the presences of colds throughout the nation and all made me feel that possibly the Service was under the weather.

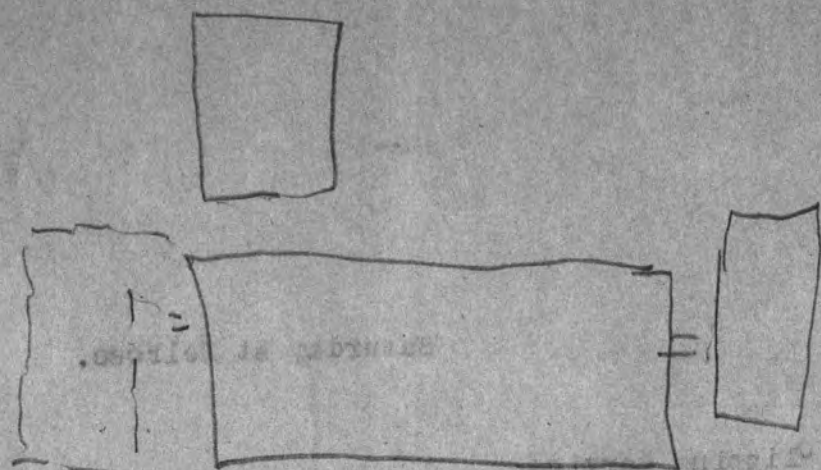
Now I am re-assured, and henceforth, should there be little skips in written communications, I shall charge off the gaps to rush of business, and particularly your inability to get in touch with a typewriter, between licks of business.

Your letter to Mme. de S. went through safely, and I was made acquainted with its contents. Miss Hobina usually addresses the beginning of the letter (on the inside, thus: Dear Aunt "Ammie" and "Rancois". This usually seems to cover both of us, and so removes any idea that there are outside communications. Mme. de S. expresses genuine opinions that your new position no doubt presses more heavily on your time, and finds you heroic to write as often as you do. If you occasionally drop a line that the pressure of business robs you of much time you would like to use for correspondence, that line should last for years, - as does a similar one from Hobina.

It was good of you to give me such a graphic account of election day, as it evolved in your locality. I think you were very noble to arise at such an early hour to exercise your duty, and I have no doubt of a certain amount of secret satisfaction that must have accrued when, at the close of the day, the results of the "action's" decision began coming in. Save for one son, Joe, currently in New Jersey, the Madam was the only one in this family voting for the right candidate. Her son in law bet her \$10.00 the other man would win. He bet everybody he could find, and accordingly didn't come out much richer for letting his prejudice run away with him. His antipathy stems from the fact that he is a doctor, and like to many doctors, his is not a profession but a money making business, and he hates anything that suggests socialized medicine. Well, like it or not, he might as well get ready for it.

4301

1025



Above you will note one of my inimitable sketches. The pencil being hard, I can't see much, as to whether the track of the lead recorded or not, but I'll take a chance. The sketch indicates the general concept of Meade Villa. The flanker on the left was moved back in the field some time ago, and has disappeared. That was the Cabinet, where B. L. C. housed his library, minerals, etc. That should be put back, of course.

The flanker on the right still stands. It was occupied by Miss Feliciano Wailles, daughter of B. L. C., who later married Mr. Green of Cayoso. She shared that flanker with Miss Sue C. Covington, niece of B. L. C., and she was the sister of the first Mrs. Edwin Wailles of Wilderness, first wife of Miss Nellie Anderson's father.

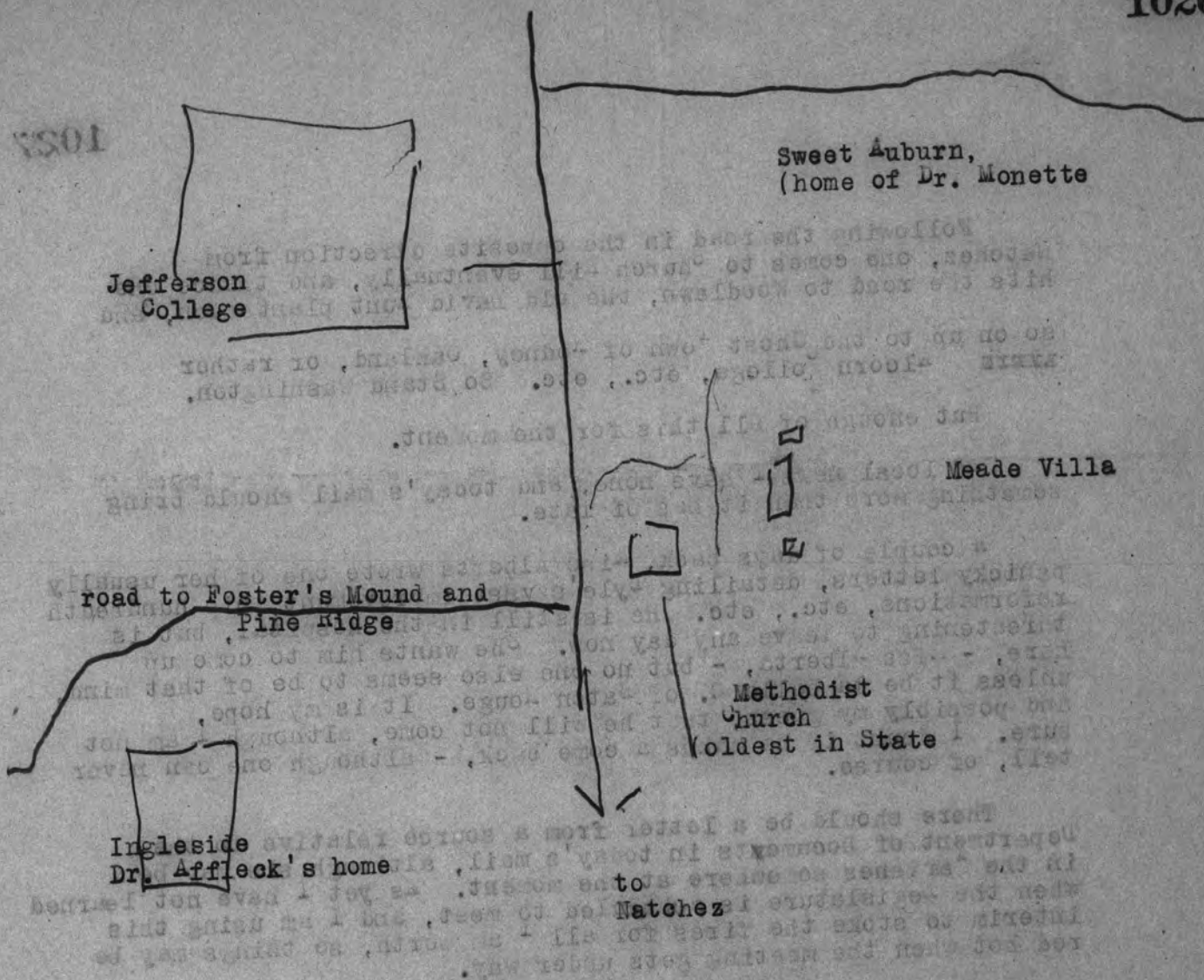
The main section of the house contains two large rooms down stairs and two upstairs. A gallery, - upper and lower, runs across the front of the house. A similar one runs across the back, but is enclosed with windows. The building to the rear is a two story one of brick, and was formerly the kitchen. There are three large cisterns to the house, and as electricity is present in Washington, bath rooms could easily be installed in the house. You will note from the arrangement of the flankers, that they could readily be developed as separate units, - bedroom and bath for each unit, with the main house for library, living room, etc. I might add that there is a good basement to the house, - an unusual feature for one of that early period in which it was built, and that could no doubt be developed into the coziest of dining rooms if one cared to.

From the fire places being the same design as those in Connelly's Tavern, it is assumed the house was constructed by the same workmen. Another similar feature is the curving ceilings of the front and back galleries, a feature present in the end rooms at Connelly's Tavern, - and usually found in buildings constructed by ship carpenters. It is generally conceded that Connelly's was built about 1795 under the Spanish regime. The thing could be set down for Meade Villa.

On the next page I shall undertake a general idea of the town of Washington:-

1026

4301



From this classic jewel, you may get an inordinately rough idea of the general lay-out of Washington.

I realize, of course, that all this talk and so-called map drawing, plus one nickle, would buy a cup of coffee. But even though premature, it seems to me that you might enjoy having in mind, - if such is possible from such outrageous tracks, just how, in a vague way, Washington remains. Being on the cement highway, between Natchez and Vicksburg, there are 4 buses, going and coming between those two places every day, which makes travel into town, should the family Ford break down, rather easy. Natchez is five or 6 miles distant, and better still, there are some very nice dirt roads running in several different directions out of Washington, for exploring. The one to the right, past Sweet Auburn, leads down the Duck Pond Road, and about five miles along it, one runs into the Liberty Road, and brings one practically to the entrance of Windy Hill. I need not detail the places along the road to the left, leading to Foster's mound, Pine Ridge, etc. It is a road with lovely traces, - if they don't cut them all down. .

1027

Following the road in the opposite direction from Natchez, one comes to Church Hill eventually, and thence one hits the road to Woodlawn, the old David Hunt plantation, and

so on up to the Ghost Town of Rodney, Oakland, or rather ~~there~~ Alcorn College, etc., etc. So Stand Washington.

But enough of all this for the moment.

Of local news I have none, and today's mail should bring something more than it has of late.

A couple of days back, Miss Alberta wrote one of her usually panicky letters, detailing Lyle's vast improvement, his hundredth reformations, etc., etc. He is still in the hospital, but is threatening to leave any day now. She wants him to come up here, - Miss Alberta, - but no one else seems to be of that mind, unless it be the belle C. of Baton Rouge. It is my hope, and possibly my guess, that he will not come, although I am not sure. I doubt if he makes a come back, - although one can never tell, of course.

There should be a letter from a source relative to the Department of Documents in today's mail, although she may be in the Archives somewhere at the moment. As yet I have not learned when the Legislature is scheduled to meet, and I am using this interim to stoke the fires for all I am worth, so things may be red hot when the meeting gets under way.

I am so interested in the good work you are doing in behalf of the Doubleday Doran manuscript, and I know James is enchanted at the re-assurance you were able to forward him. To all yours

at the moment I am at a standstill relative to almost everything, save my political fence building", for other than personal letters, I cannot get far, what with the Madam lacking in energy and concentration, and all my little colored friends busy in the cotton patches and the pecane groves. But the latter industry will begin easing off shortly, and then I shall be able to get on with some of the other tasks at hand.

Please forgive my curious handiwork in map drawing. It will be so pleasant when you are able to correct them on the site...

1028

November 13th, being
Monday.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

This report is forwarded primarily to provide an enclosure from Madam Ferris, which speaks for itself.

In this case, as in all other enclosures, please do not bother to return them, unless some particular wish in that direction is expressed.

There is nothing of especial interest in this communication, save that it demonstrates an obvious feeling of good will. That, however, is advantageous, since the same writer may influence her girl friend on the Commission.

I have responded in a short letter, in which I took advantage of the opportunity to point out the extreme value of the British volume of the early 1770's, which I propose to add to items for the Department of Documents, once that is established. I think Miss Ferris may pass along her estimate of the value of this business to the proper party, - and so drop is added to drop, and eventually the thing may float.

I spent Sunday, as is my custom, on Little River. I journeyed into a rather remote section, hedged in by moss draped bayous and difficult of egress because of the dampness of the roads. In one lonely cabin after another, I found people to chat with, and although I recognized no one, everyone seemed to know me. This is because I was one white person in wh such a vast spread of color, I reckon.

News from New Orleans appears to follow the usual pattern. Old Man River appears to be on the mend, and the latest report is that he will resume his former residence at the hotel, instead of coming here, - or to his apartment. So be it. But all these rumors come from little Miss Alberta, and anything she says may be precisely the opposite of actuality.

over

1029

On Saturday I was expecting two or three pieces in the post which did not come through. Perhaps they will arrive in today's. There should be a line from Essae Mae and one from George Lester and, although of no importance, one from Caroline Worman, who is scheduled to speak in Natchitoches on Friday, and will probably head down this way at that time.

Baton Rouge and I agree that the Louisiana Scrapbook should be submitted to L. S. U. Press, according to a note received from that area on Friday. I shall skip down there early in December, instead of November, unless the Legislature gets under way prior to that time. The advent of Arnett Lane here about the 30th makes me want to be here at that time, for my absence from here during his last visit put things in such a stew that I want to be at the controls, - so to speak, during the impending visit. I shall see what today's post brings to hand, in order that I can frame some sort of a pattern for operations, and report accordingly.

A whole flock of things have prevented me from getting much done by way of correspondence this morning before the postman arrives, and so I shall fold up this unsatisfactory note for now, and resume the report when a little more leisure becomes available.

I seem to be feeling pretty good, and the rest of the household so-so. I trust the weather favors your neighborhood and that you are bubbling over with vim and vigor.....

I have been thinking of you a great deal lately, and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been very busy here, but I always find time to think of my friends.

I have been thinking of you a great deal lately, and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been very busy here, but I always find time to think of my friends.

1030

1001

duplicate

1030

Monday at Melrose. I have been thinking of you a great deal lately, and wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are well and happy. I have been very busy here, but I always find time to think of my friends.

Dear Friend,

Thanks for your nice letter in this morning's mail.

I, too, was sorry to have missed you on your departure, but with such a heavy schedule ahead of you, - I am sure you were glad that you struck out early. It is too bad you were forced to pass up Waverly, but it is good you made the St. Francisville graveyard, for that alone will content Madam Ferris until she gets around to do Natchez with you.

I hope you will count me in for an hour on the latter go-round, as I should much like to untangle a couple of traces with you for a few hours, to share a couple of delicious, but tightly concealed old Territorial houses that up to now the world appears to have passed by.

It was good of you to mention Rosenwald to Helen. Last year's approach had a few hilarious angles of which I must speak when next we sit before a blazing fireplace in this house.

With the Legislature meeting shortly, I am keeping my fingers crossed, in expectation of your success in putting through the Amendments to thaw certain funds, in order that life-blood may start flowing in the new Division of Documents and Records. One great gap in any history of the lower Mississippi Valley is the disappearance of all British Records covering the pre-Spanish sovereignty of the River Parishes. Lost though these records have been,

(over)

1031

0201

I have just discovered the location of a volume, kept during British occupation, which is priceless as a key to unlocking the original establishment of vast plantation holdings from the mouth of Red River to St. Joseph.

Nothing is known of the primary establishment of great Louisiana families in this region, - their inception being clouded by the absence of the British documents. This precious volume, if secured, will turn a whole series of beacons on what what thought to be the impenetrable shadows of the past.

But for the moment, I am letting this treasure stay put, as it would be a fitting blast to sound off the establishment of the Division of Documents and Records. Its existence, when announced, will startle the historical world in Louisiana, and prove invaluable to students and lay people alike.

On Sunday I found myself on Little River, and I thought of you and Helen as I lingered for a moment at the foot bridge in front of St. Mary's-on-the-Bayou. We must try to make a round there some full moonlight night when the darkies are having a gumbo. I think Madam Ferris should adjust her next visit with one eye on the status of the moon, and we shall see what we can do about remote Little River.

Aunt Cammie seems much as usual and naturally awaits with interest your account of how things turn in New Orleans.

Sincerely,

francois.

1032

Report to Clipping Service:

Everybody has been busy this week, and although correspondence has lagged, still the telepathy department has been working at full speed.

The enclosed note from Mrs. Brandon speaks of the book of the British era of which I have spoken before. It appears to contain some rather interesting things, and I shall eventually enjoy going through it for other particulars. Her reference to the two account books, formerly in Connelly's Tavern, but subsequently removed, naturally excites my interest. I shall begin sniffing about the country side for them, and with a little luck, may track them down. At the moment I sense that they may be in Tennessee, where Miss Charlie Compton's sister, - and heir, - lives. I cannot go direct to her for these, however, as it might, in turn, excite her interest in the volume spoken of in Miss Nellie's letter. But I think I shall catch up with them eventually, although it is quite possible that they may not be in Tennessee at all, - for Miss Charlie may have sold them to almost anyone. How she came by them would be interesting, and where the balance of the volume under discussion may be would be equally so.

We are trapping again this season, and about ten minutes ago, one of the darkies shot a skunk just outside my door, - one caught in a trap during the night. The boy forgot to drag the thing away from the house before finishing him off, and the result is that I am waving in the breeze with the intensity of skunk which permeates everything. I hope it doesn't sink too much into this report.

The latest news from New Orleans indicates that Lyle has left the hospital and is back again at the St. Charles. Heaven alone knows what the next news may bring. I think he doesn't want to come up here at the moment. No one knows on what he is living, which is his business. Whether he will begin drinking again is a matter of speculation to all.

Many people sent checks to Miss Alberta, when he was in the hospital, - they seemed to run around \$50.00 each. When he was here in July, he was on his last \$20.00, he told me. In the mean time, the Federal Government started suit (over)

3891

1033

against him to collect \$475.00 for back income taxes. Miss Alberta says the publishers came through with that amount on royalties. This may be true, although it was generally understood that as his books were out of print, there were no royalties. The whole business is a mystery and a mess.

The Madam seems to have divorced herself completely from its more personal aspects, considering that long since Lyle has not been the person she knew, and therefore nothing to wring her hands over. I suppose her fixation on me may in part account for her detached attitude toward him. It's all very strange and a little boring.

On the ultra confidential side, it is interesting that she sent a batch of pecanecakes to my collaborator this past week. She hasn't mentioned it to me. He has responded with a thank you note and a gift which will be received in today's mail. Curious how the mind works, isn't it?

I await letters from George Lester and Essae Mae, both of whom are behind in their correspondence. In the case of Essae Mae, however, I know that she has been flying around through two or three different Parishes, getting new libraries established, etc. I haven't heard as yet when the legislature is to be called. Soon, I hope.

Following his original request to get him an appointment to speak in Natchez, I have heard nothing from Arnett Kane, - scheduled to be here on the 30th. Miss Myra, responding immediately to my communication with her on the subject, asked about the amount of money Mr. E. expects to receive. I told her I didn't know, and wrote him on that point. Up to now, nothing has come through. He is a bag, if I may say so.

The 3 and 5 year old grandsons were here all during the week, and in consequence, not a lick of work was done. I am hoping to have a better break this week, although because of inability to concentrate for more than a few moments at a time on any point, making a column is up hill business. I try to get in as much work as I can through correspondence, and perhaps I should just mark time at the moment until things begin perking in the general direction of Baton Rouge. I have little patience, however, to just be waving my arms in the air, and getting no where, but perhaps time is hatching eggs for us, and so I should content myself.

This is a poor excuse for a report. What with the skunk and a lot of housecleaning going on at the moment, I shall have to content myself with it. Please forgive. I do not want Miss Nellie's (Mrs. Marco's) letter back.....

3892

Surget 1034
genealogy

November 23rd, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

An American Dilemma to hand and I am delighted. Only I know of its arrival, and for some strange reason, I want to hold on to it just for myself for a little while, even though in so doing, I shall explore but little of its contents for a while.

I had no idea it was such an exhaustive work, and I can readily appreciate the splendid reviews of the work, and especially in those references to its completeness, for it has every appearance of that. It is going to be something to read and to consult for years to come, - sometimes in Louisiana, sometimes in Meade Villa, I hope, and I treasure it doubly because of the promise it holds, almost like a keystone to what shall be built later in sleepy little Washington, Miss. Thank you much might be one way to indicate my appreciation, but I count on your understanding of all that it stands for and how long and broad is the scope which a Thank You phrase embraces.

And speaking of the Dilemma, recalls your request for additional particulars regarding the episode transpiring in Amite some time back. The trial came to nothing, as was to be supposed. No one would identify and little energy, I think, was expended on making a thorough case. I know one of the individuals supposed to be on the side of the old preacher's son, and that individual has such a hill billy type of personality that just to come in contact with him always gives me a terrific headache. You can be certain he wasn't going to expend too much energy for the man whose rights he was appointed to defend, especially as he loathes people of color. So things pan out and so does one segment of society distrust the justice as administered by the other group.

Other news came to hand from Mississippi yesterday, in the form of a death notice, appearing in The Democrat, of the passing of Lennox Stanton. Mr. Stanton played out a roll during his life time that is typically Natchez. He was a nephew of Miss Elizabeth, Miss B., and Miss Maude of Windy Hill. He was their overseer for a while, when in the late 1920's or early 1930's, he married the widow of Mrs. James Surget. Mrs. Surget was about 50 years older than Stanton, having been born about Civil War times, the daughter of S. S. Boyd of Arlington. By marrying Mr. Surget, (over)

1035

Miss Boyd married one of the richest men in Adams County. Their honeymoon was extraordinary. He gave his bride a mulatto maid as a wedding gift. Following their marriage, they started on their honeymoon for New Orleans by boat. As the maid combed the bride's hair before the latter prepared to retire, the maid seemed to pull the perruque a little gingerly. The bride protested; the maid countered with this surprising statement: "I am glad I am hurting you, since you have married my lover!" Now wasn't that a good send off?

Well, they had one child, - Carlotta, at present Mrs. Dave McKitterick of ~~xxxx~~ Blmscourt.

The Surgets didn't live together much, Mrs. Surget living in town with her daughter Carlotta, in Molasses flat, a building next to the old Mississippi Bank, while Mr. Surget lived at Cherry Grove, near Mantua, down in the Second Creek neighborhood.

Following Mr. Surget's death, Mrs. Surget, without ever revealing it, married Lennox Stanton, - that was years after Carlotta married Dave McKitterick, and together the Stantons lived at Gloucester. On her death in the late 1930's, it turned out that she had been married all the time to her "secretary", Lennox. What was more, it turned out that she had transferred by sale a number of her properties, - Gloucester, Lynwood, etc., to Lennox, so that Carlotta, while inheriting about 16,000 acres, didn't come out quite so rich-rich, as she had supposed she would.

Then Lennox married somebody from New Orleans, and during the past number of years, they have lived in "atchez in the former Surget holdings, while Lennox kept an eye out for all that he had acquired, as well as what he might acquire, and you may recall that I mentioned two or three years ago, that his mother lived and died at Windy Hill with Miss Maude. I think he was angling for Windy Hill at Miss Maude's death, but now Miss Maude has survived him, and what will be next I know not. I believe she has a niece living in Chicago.

One typical "atchez twist to the thing was this: - In having married the widow Surget, Lennox became the step father of Mrs. Dave McKitterick. The step father died at 55, leaving a step daughter of 75. I give up.

I don't know as all this business interest you, and yet I thought such a sample might give you some insight into the strange business that transpires in Adams County, and somehow I feel, too, that gradually learning these curious turns, you will feel the more intimately acquainted with the place when pleasant circumstances develop that will enable you to observe them first hand. - And thanks again for the Dilemma. I am keeping it here before me on my desk, which means I shall have the clipping service right here beside me in thought.....

1036

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

As I take pen in hand to jot down a memorandum, I find that my mind is playing tricks on me. The fact is that I have filed so many reports mentally of late, that I cannot recall what has been jotted down and what has merely been placed on a mental calendar for reference.

It is my understanding from my collaborator that a note is being sent to you shortly, - or has already been sent, relative to something about a manuscript for Hellen Ferris. I think you may already have her address, - or may receive it from another source, but just for sure, I shall repeat it herewith:

Hellen Ferris,
114 Morningside Drive,
New York, New York.

In the event you should care to reach her by telephone, you will of course find her, - or her company, listed under Junior Literary Guild, - or possibly under Doubleday Doran. I reckon her business address must be something West 49th Street, as her office is in the "Life and Time" Building.

If you should care to contact her, - whether upon business or purely social grounds, I think you would not be disappointed in establishing the connection. I don't know if they entertain on week ends or not. It is my understanding they have a place in the country, - a farmhouse somewhere or other, - I believe near Highland Falls on the Hudson, - although I am a bit hazy on that point.

During her visit here, it turned out that she had been a good friend of Rachel Field's, so that established a bond of especial sympathy between her and the "adam."

Living the life one must in Manhattan, there is never any time to take on extra acquaintances, I realize. And yet, in the event you should care to engineer a telephone friendship, I think you might find it pleasant.

over
....

3801

1037

The enclosed letter is of no especial interest, - save in one respect, - in that it recalls certain times quite vividly. I thought you might enjoy glancing at that part. I am wondering what the status of the Mr. A. referred to in it may be at present.. It seems like a long time since 1937 when the lady was looking up her family tree, and isn't curious that her search should have almost completed its orbit by contacting her present correspondent.

Fondly I am turning over the pages of An American Dilemma, somehow finding sufficient pleasure just in turning through the pages without actually knowing what they contain. It is grand to have such a pleasure, for somehow I shall absorb something of sentiment about the work before I actually undertake its reading. Instinctively I feel that it is going to be a source of a great deal of value down through the years, and a spring from which hours of pleasure may be drawn upon, - I like to think, especially on winter evenings, - possibly at some such place as Meade Villa.

I have been giving quite an extra lot of thought of late to post Civil War problems, particularly the Dilemma department. I have come to the conclusion that what be-devils the situation more than any other single factor is or was the necessity for using threats to break the shackles of carpet bag rule which terminated in Mississippi in 1875, and its pattern of force was adopted by other Southern States, who styled it The Mississippi Plan. Republican control from Washington was so stupid, as applied to the South, that Southerners of necessity had to break the grip, and in order to do so, they more or less took Law into their own hands to accomplish a much needed change. I have about made up my mind, however, that this seemingly necessary move somehow established a precedent which too many Southerners still apply whenever they find the Law not operating to suit their especial needs. The evils of law breaking, as brought about by National Prohibition, is a somewhat parallel case, in that it furthered America's greatest weakness from earliest times, - the breaking of law. Smuggling in colonial days, to avoid unjust duties on imported goods, illicit slave importations to satisfy planter demands, etc., are but other cases in point. Now in the 1940's, it seems to me, the one time seeming necessity for breaking the Law has boiled down to people feeling that they are doing nothing unusual or criminal if they merely break a law now and then to solve some problem for their own particular benefit. People, individually, may benefit at the expense of others, - especially the underprivileged, - but the community as a whole, does not, and that's where I think we are today, heirs and paupers of the Mississippi Plan of 1875....

3801

1038

November 27th, 1944.

Memorandum for Clipping Service:

The enclosed letter amused me, and I pass it along to you, with the request that you dispose of it on reading. Please do not return it.

It covers a confusion which had the happy result of bringing forth a long over due letter from the writer of the enclosure, and Mme. de S. supposes that through an inadvertence on her part she actually forwarded something which in reality she never did. I feel that you might get a laugh out of the mix up, and for that reason I pass it along.

It has been a quiet week end in these parts. Not much must undertaken or accomplished, but we did read two or three pages from the current Journal of Southern History, - I suppose it is the December number, although it may be the November. In the event, after the holidays, you should run across it, when times are less strenuous, you will enjoy reading the article on ante bellum medicine by some woman, the article on the end of Reconstruction in Mississippi by David Donaldson, and there is a third article about Debow (sic), which we haven't read, but which will probably be interesting. There is also an article by one W. D. Hamilton on Jefferson College which is entirely mis-leading and of little if any value. If you never run across this issue, you will not have skipped a segment of southern history that cannot be filled in elsewhere, but should you chance to run across it, you will enjoy turning through it, - particularly the article on ante bellum medicine, which, thus far, appears to be excellent.

I know not how this week will turn out, so far as local doings go. Some of the Henry's kin died in San Antonio, - Mr. Robert Walmsley, - and will be buried in Natchitoches on Tuesday. I suppose his sisters may be here for a couple of days, - and I assume that your friend, Harnett Kane, will arrive about Wednesday for his Thursday evening talk in town. As yet we haven't heard from him since the letter requesting the Natchez speaking date, of which I have spoken before.

I am awaiting news from Natchez concerning local doings there on the social and domestic side, although of no particular interest. I know that there is a movement a-foot to get

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2601

1039

Miss Dockery and Mr. Dana to go to live with Miss Maude at Windy Hill Manor. An eviction order was delivered to Audley Conner, the Sheriff, in July, although at this late date it hasn't been served. During Lennox's (Lennox Stanton's) life, I think there wasn't a chance that Miss Maude might be sold the idea of taking in the Dickery-Dock's goat ~~herd~~ herd, and all, for Lennox most certainly had his eye on Windy Hill. But now that Lennox is gone, I am wondering if Miss Maude may not fall for the Goat Castle business. It will be fun to see how that thing unravels.

There was a good moon last night, and I walked afar and alone. There is still plenty of cotton in the fields, and in the moonlight, cotton fields always look like oceans of gardenias. It was beautiful to contemplate, especially under such a magnificent sky. Eventually I ended up at the cabin of a friend who was suffering the tortures of the damned, thanks to a rather rough session he had with the local doctor who was supposed to have pulled a wisdom tooth for the darkies, but had succeeded only in breaking off the tooth and possibly cracking the jaw. He had given him some soothing syrup which apparently had no soothing qualities in it, and I was delighted to recall that a friend of mine, interested in medicine, before leaving here a year ago, had left me some effective pills in that department. Accordingly rest came to the afflicted, and my trip back home across the cotton fields was the happier I, for any landscape is the more beautiful when one is assured that rest and comfort have settled down over the cabins.

There has been a great deal of pulling and hauling about this place, as I have attempted this brief report. It seems that there is an attempt being made, and it appears rather unsuccessful, to get the bed curtains on the big old four poster in this room. Accordingly, I shall fold up at this point, and lend some unsolicited advice, and then fly to the postman with this.....

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1401

1040

November 29th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Here comes a dull letter, but even though there is nothing particular on my mind, I want to chat a bit regardless.

In going over the Journal of Southern History, - mentioned in my last report, - find the articles referred to petered out disappointingly. The one on Southern medicine was good in so far as it went, but it didn't go far enough. There was much talk about Yellow Fever, - and very interesting it was, too, - but although other doctors were mentioned, Dr. Monette's name never did appear. As it was he who introduced Quarantine, - and made it work, - it seems to me that no article on Yellow Fever in the lower Mississippi Valley could be written fairly without at least getting his name into it somewhere. The impression is also given that Mississippi was out of the running so far as the practice of medicine went in ante bellum times. As for State organizations of medicine, this is probably true, and yet there were amazing concentrations of good doctors, - some of them remarkable, in the River Counties, - Adams, Jefferson, Wilkinson and Warren, although I gather the writer of the article didn't know about them. The little we read about the personal life of Mr. Debow gave nothing much but excerpts from his writings, and we didn't finish it. The article by David Donaldson about Reconstruction in Mississippi was good. He says something complimentary about Governor Ames, - son in law of General Butler, that dreadful bag who ruled New Orleans for a while in 1862, but I am not sure that Ames was much in politics. Later Ames used to play golf with old John D. Rockefeller, and may have shone better with a golf stick in his hand than he with with a sabre.

Some of the Henry "almost" kin folk died in San Antonio the other day, - at least one person did, and was buried in Hatchitoches yesterday. His name was Robert Walmsley, and his wife and two sisters are expected to come here today to spend a few days. Mr. Bachelier, - the little man who lives remotely on Little River, some 10 miles away from here is also scheduled to make his semi-annual visit today, to remain over night.

(over)

1041

He made one boner by passing along word in advance that as he wanted to visit here when I was about, he would like to know before hand if he should find me here, were he to make up his mind at present. It was nice of him, - so far as I was concerned, - but the statement was a bit twisted, probably, and might just as well have been skipped over.

On the 9:30 train from New Orleans, Mr. Kane will arrive to spend the night, too. Tomorrow I am supposed to show him Ile Brevelle which he intends to stress in his forth coming volume on Louisiana plantations. He says something about having recently spoken with Mrs. Haygood of Rosenwald and that the latter had something favorable to say about chances for a grant coming my way this year, - should I apply. I think I shall take another crack at it, - although, as you may readily imagine, my heart is more on the possibility of the Baton Rouge business..

Some Roman Emperor has remarked about the value of money, - regardless of its source, and I think he had something there, - although not everything.

A nice letter from Mrs. Ferris came yesterday, and as it contained something about a rejected manuscript from Doubleday Doran, and a suggestion that it be submitted to a literary agent, who is a friend of hers, I have sent the letter to James, with the request that he forward the letter to you eventually. You will dispose of the letter, if you please. I do not want it back, although, if you should care to, you might make a mental note of the bag's name, - la Squires, I believe it is.

I have also scouted the idea to James that la Ferris might be able to give a push to "52" with the playing card illustrations, were she to see it before passing it along to Doubleday. I have told him that he might speak to you of this matter, should he feel its submission to Mrs. Tibbetts (la Ferris) should be in order. I have no doubt you will hear from him on this point.

A letter yesterday from Miss Alberta says that Lyle is back at the St. Charles Hotel, that he has definitely given up drinking, etc., etc. She further remarks that although he "needs coddling", it is too cold for him to come to Melrose in the winter. Amen. What the summer will bring forth, we shall see. She declares that "as soon as he gets his typewriter set-up", he will be writing the Madam. Amen, - again. But how long it takes anyone, - and especially him to set up a typewriter, I wouldn't know, - never having set up one myself.

You see, - as indicated above, this report did turn out dull enough, but I shall try to do better in my next.

1042

December 1st, 1944.

Report to Clipping Service:

Well, Barnett has come and gone, - thank Heavens.

I'll skip the negative side for the most part, and mention the positive side in preference.

Confidentially, - so that you may not refer to it in a letter to her, he was gathering material to do a few pages, - possibly a chapter on Melrose and Aunt Cammie.

He says he saw Mrs. Haygood not long since in New Orleans and she talked about me. According to his report, my application last year was turned down on two counts: - it had a shading of too much historical interpretation, and secondly, Natchez has already been done too much.

I was of course glad to learn the reasons for its rejection. I recognize, too, that for the average person, yesterday doesn't matter. Was it Lord Byron who said that the only measure of understanding we have for tomorrow is yesterday?

Well, so that thing stands. As for Natchez and her negroes already having been done too much, - this comes as something of a surprise, for I know nothing about that. Of course Dr. Davis did get a grant to do something about the mulatto Johnson's Diary, but as I pointed out in my prospectus, that job can not be complete or finished without the volume which I have, which is the key to the whole shooting match. But I guess that is beside the point.

According to Kane, I have an excellent chance of winning an award this year on a study of Ile Brevelle. This equally amazes me, since I have always feared to use the word "mulatto" to Rosenwald. Furthermore, it seems to me that Ile Brevelle is rather too specialized and unique to have any general bearing on the negro problem in the United States. Still, I must admit that he has won Rosenwald awards, and having talked to la Haygood, he ought to know more about the thing than I do.

I shall accordingly drop a letter in this morning's

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1043

mail to the lady, detailing what Kane told me, and saying that I should be glad to receive an application blank if she thinks there is much of a possibility of receiving an award.

Kane brought up the Pipes affair. I cut him off on the first mention of differences. I explained that I was not interested in the three personalities involved and if they could not get on together. I pointed out that boiled down to an essence, - so far as I was concerned, - before his last visit to Melrose, I had a pair of eyes. After his visit, I had none. He had previously remarked that he was certainly glad somebody had invented the typewriter, for he could never write anything long hand. I made use of the statement, remarking that he might know just how I felt, since if robbed of a typewriter, he couldn't write, so neither could I, robbed of eyes, get very far. He expressed amazement at the thought, said he had never thought of that, etc., etc. Our contact remained civilized and friendly, - but I thought it just as well to set him straight on that point, and for a moment give him a glimpse at another person's view point. And that is that.

On another front, Harnett spoke of having met la Johnston, - the famous photographer, and says she is dying to come to Melrose. According to him, she is 80 years old, very domineering, quite a heavy drinker, altogether grasping and good with the camera. Her advent at Melrose ought to be filled with possibilities, I should think. I reckon we may expect several days visit from her before long. It will be interesting to see how she will hit it off with Aunt Cammie.

I seem to have a stack of things to do this morning, - although I was up and doing at 4:30, and it is now almost 8., so I guess I shall have to content myself with this brief chat this morning. Guests are arriving within the hour to spend the day, - some ancient bags of no interest, and I must clear up my desk before they get here, - clean up the desk, at least, so far as "must" letters are concerned. Immediately before me satnds a lush vase of narcissus, and along side my two volumes of An American Dilemma, - so you can readily understand in which direction my thoughts travel as I glance from the keyboard.....

1044

December 2nd, 1944.

Memorandum To Clipping Service:

Your joint report came in this morning's mail, and I hasten to respond to congratulate you on the skill in which you handled the item, - jointly. The idea is splendid, - the fact that pressure of business keeps you from writing more frequently. It is accepted on its face value and satisfies everyone, - and of course I receive the additional reports confidentially and never refer to them.

I am so glad you are going to hear Don Giovanni, for it is always a joy, - both the seeing and hearing, for it certainly wraps up the 18th century in a bit of celaphane in a manner that no one but Herr Mozart could do. Curious how the script escapes me at the moment, - I mean the play by Beaumarchais on which it was based, - or am I thinking of the Marriage of Figaro, or two other items. I heard Pinza do the thing, - Figaro, - once and have been enchanted ever since.

Until you mentioned it, I didn't realize la Rethberg had folded up so far as the Metropolitan was concerned. I shall never forget the million times I observed her in The Sunken Bell, - something which wasn't tuneful enough for me, but which I got three times in a row on Thursday nights, as I recall.

Either I will enclose herewith, - or the Madam will enclose, - a letter which came to hand today from la Haygood of Rosenwald. Curiously enough, she was writing me on the 29th and I was writing her on the 30th, - and all on the same subject, - but it is nice, and possibly auspicious, - that she was writing me before I was knocking off a line to her. I have responded to her letter of the 29th, pointing out that I am fearful of the word mulatto when talking to Rosenwald, supposing that they do not recognize the existence of such an entity. I am under the impression that they recognize everything not white as Negro, but people on Cane River would die, - the mulatto department, if anyone ever voiced such a theory. You see the difference is this in their minds - the mulattoes, I mean: - They are not negroes with some white blood, but rather they are white people with some colored blood, - and oh! the difference.

Well, we shall see what la Haygood has to say about the whole thing, and I shall advise you up to the minute on what transpires in that direction, - of course.

The Madam was delighted to have your clipping from Harry Hansen's column, reviewing the Kane book. She had been hoping for that for some time.

1401

1045

An hour's interruption, as between this side and the reverse, leaves me a little uncertain as to just "where I was at".

Anyway, I shall talk a little on Mr. Kane's visit. I think I told you he asks too many questions, and as an example I cite such a thing as he addressed to "unt Cammie:

"Do you say your prayers every night before retiring?"

"Go to Hell", would have been my response.

She answered: "I wouldn't dare not to".

He was always whipping out his note book to jot down some phrase or other of mine. I don't blame him for not trusting his memory, but he cut himself off from getting some useful stuff out of me by thus warning me that he was lifting phrases, - not data, - with every sentence I spoke.

It isn't fare to dish a book because it has an occasional mistake or a word used incorrectly, - I realize that, and yet if you want to sense his lack of culture, - or erudition, all you have to read his account of sugar being introduced into "ouisiana. He gives an account of a big dinner given by the Spanish Governor, and refers to the "waiters" bringing in the sugar. If he had ever done any studying of the Spanish era, - or any 18th century era, he ought to realize that neither his Most Catholic Majesty nor any of his representatives ever employed "waiters". It was footmen who served at table, and "waiters" is a word that came in on contemporary times. It makes no difference whatsoever, and yet it does discolor the wine a little for those who have respect for a true brew.

I am again interrupted, so shall lay this aside, and return to it later, ----

Aunt Cammie suggests that I forward you the Rosenwald letter which came unsolicited. I do so herewith, and I suppose it might be returned eventually, - but there is no rush for it to go into the file, as I have no need for it. As I am pressed for time, I shall break off at this point, but shall try to file a more lengthy report next time.....

1401

1046

Tuesday, December 5th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It is good to have such a nice lengthy report as has come to hand in the last mail.

Only one point would I make regarding the filing of such reports: - the element of time doesn't enter into the matter. In times so busy as these, do not fret if opportunity does not present itself to forward these communications. Once, before realizing how difficult it is in the current strain of office affairs, I worried a little regarding the health status. But realizing the pressure of business is such that it often precludes personal correspondence, I am perfectly contented with telepathetic communications, and I shall be the happier if instead of forcing time to concede a page, you merely maintain thought waves in the place of the written word, and I shall be the happier to know you are concerning strength for a heavier correspondence when the pressure eases.

I am delighted that you are going to contact Helen Ferris, for there is great satisfaction in sharing one's friends all the way round. I am writing her today, pointing out that she has a measure of pleasure in store for herself when the contact is established. I have already spoken to her of the "52", so, if you use that item as a gang plank, it will be familiar to her. But if you don't, I know she will be equally cordial and happy to see you. You will feel perfectly free to speak with her relative to the proposed Department of Documents and Records, and I am under the impression she may exert some influence on Essae Mae concerning that item.

There was a letter that was hilarious in yesterday's mail from little Miss Robina. She mentioned having been one of some 36 listeners to Barnett Kane's last of 5 speeches made in Shreveport on Friday. Following the speech, she chatted with him for a while, - it being the first time they had met. The first thing he asked her for was interesting details about "unt Cammie that might be included in his forth coming book. But he told her not to tell these stories to him then, but to write them to him, - a little nervy, I thought, - as did Miss Robina, - who quite flatly told us in her letter that she wasn't dreaming of writing a thing. Miss Robina did ask us, however34
(over)

1047

how we thought he would like the account of Aunt Cammie undressing at noon time on the main street of Texarkana, in front of the National Bank. This is in reference to an episode when Miss Hobina was driving Aunt Cammie to Hot Springs three years ago, when Aunt Cammie started to slip off an undershirt which had proved too warm for the weather of mid day. It has long been a standing joke between those two ladies, but I reckon Harnett wouldn't appreciate it much.

His greatest weakness is his avariciousness, for he is always so busy jotting down details that persons like me just don't bather to pass along the best stuff, for pleasant personal contact seems to dry up when one observes the other is merely intent on converting every syllable into cash. I shall be interested in seeing the eventual chapter on "elrose which is proposes to write. Somehow I have a feeling that someone like you could go through the chapter with a pencil and underline every word, phrase, reference and paragraph that he has lifted from me. I have no objection to his making use of all the information he can get, - (he might have obtained more had he been a little more civilized) - but it is the obvious determination to wring dry those whom he tries to convince are objects of his dis-interested friendship.

The enclosed note from Adam Brandon may or may not be of interest, - I have forgotten its subject matter, and you might dispose of it when finished. As for the excerpts on the accompanying sheet, they are from the precious British account book, and I thought they might have some flavor or other of interest. I should be glad to save that paper if convenient.

Relative to the correspondent from Jonesboro, I think I recall her visit, and I am sure there was a subsequent letter dictated to her. But that, of course, must have been before I knew much about the city from whence she hailed at that time. I was very much interested to read your account of the possible origin of the family, - that is, its geographic inception in South Germany. You apologize for the comparison of the abundance of names to grains of sand. The simile didn't seem strange to me. I don't recall precisely, but I think the American parallel is "sands of the sea", and I think the phrase appears in the Bible.

In September, Aunt Cammie's son who operates this place, separated from his wife, the latter now living in "atchitoches. It seems to have been a rather friend separation after 20 years, but as both parties have consulted with me on the point since last July, I have felt like a father confessor, but a tight-lipped one, since la fille has forever twisted la "evigne's mind so that it is silly to even recognize the lady in the case when speaking of local matters. La S. is delighted with the break but of course is wrong in putting the blame on one side only. Just skip. Sorry for a dull letter. Will attempt an improvement...

1048

December 7th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Yesterday's envelope contained no Memorandum but merely a couple of letters which I thought might be of passing interest.

I did not subscribe to the Baton Rouge suggestion that sketches be made to illustrate the Beaumont volume. On the other hand, I recommended photographs for that purpose, - in Woodville such scenes as Boston Row, where la B. had her shop, a photo. of her dwelling, still in good order, the railroad station, replacing the one being used in her time, the original railroad office building, still standing, a photo of the Traces which she transversed when running contraband down from Natchez, a view of the Court House in "atchez where she had to contact the Provost Marshall, etc. La B.'s only grandson in this part of the world, - Joe Kellogg of The "lme in "atchez, has no likeness of la B., and so I think any reproduction of an ante bellum gathering might be alright for the social illustration. I think, - it occurs to me as I write these lines, that I shall write Baton Rouge that he should run up to Woodville and with camera in hand, photograph a couple of street scenes, now that Christmas is approaching and the color segment is as pronounced now as it was 80 years ago.

The other letter from la Moore I thought quite pitiful. Obviously the poor bag is sunk. I suppose you noticed she repeated the story twice about snow shovels in Ephrata. Now that she is about 53, I should imagine she could easily withdraw from military service if she cared to. One element of depression on her part, I think, is occasioned by the fact that the daughter whose husband is also stationed at the same camp la Moore is, has never understood her mother at all, and I think the proximity in which mother and daughter now find themselves probably accentuates the mother's realization of the absence of an sympathetic understanding between them. It is of course true that la bag put herself where she is, but it seems too bad she doesn't take herself out of that situation. I gather she is done with "atchez, and so I should think she would do well to withdraw from her present situation and carve out another place of residence and a job, - while the carving is good.

I didn't write her that, but I think perhaps I shall.

Yesterday's news broadcasts indicate that the Senate has returned the names of the new appointees to the State Department to the Foreign Relations Committee for further investigation. I

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1049

was interested to learn something about Will Clayton from cotton people in this area. It seems he is the largest operator of cotton in the world. I think that is public property, - or knowledge, - but I hadn't learned until yesterday, that Will Clayton controls the cotton production of Brazil. The group with whom I spoke were talking rather fast, and on a variety of subjects, so I am not sure I caught all the details correctly, but it is my understanding that Clayton controls the cotton ginning and I believe much of the land wherein the major portion of the crop in Brazil is produced, - although I am not certain about the latter point. I don't know if this explains why such a wealthy business man should have connected himself, first with the Department of Commerce, and now with the State Department. For myself I have always wondered what was best in politics, - to give jobs to people who had already proved their worth in business, - and would naturally lean in one direction or another when public policy was mapped, - or, on the other hand, give the jobs to someone quite inexperienced without proven ability in any line basing the selection on the hope that the individual without proven experience and worth would transact the business efficiently and without the bias of personal interest. It will be interesting to see if the Foreign Relations Committee touches on any of these points.

It is my understanding that J. H., the "adam's second son, who runs this place, is going to make a quick round in Brazil about Christmas time - when, it is said, the cotton season below the equator is at its height. I shall be glad to learn something of his impressions on his return.

Within a couple of days, I suppose, further word should come out of Chicago, and I shall then begin to fix up a prospectus for some subject or other relative to the volume to be considered for the award. As I recall, the awards are announced in March, and I shall make plans to run over to "atchez for a few days at that time, - possibly a few weeks, employing John Martin to assist me in rounding out the paragraphs designed to sew the various columns of the Old "atchez Scrapbook together. I am rather anxious to complete that manuscript by myself, as James and I didn't see eye to eye on the intervening paragraphs. He wanted to do those by himself, and I didn't want him to, since he is not acquainted with the history involved, - and so we let that slide. Come to think of it, I believe I will write to a lady in Bobbs Merrill in Indianapolis, who gets down this way, - Louisiana, sometimes, in search of material. I think I shall ask her to let me know next time she heads this way, so I can contact with with the manuscript at that time. James wants me to finish it and submit it to Oklahoma, but I don't think so, although I am not mentioning anything about my plans for that item at the present time, since it represents all my work.

More shortly, - and please don't try to write until after the Christmas rush is over. I will understand and be the happier to realize you are not forcing correspondence when there is such a great number of demands.....

1201

1050

Saturday Night, December 9th.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

A generous postman today. He brought two or three letters, including two from the Clipping Bureau, one straight mail, the other by air mail. I am sorry that his departure leave me no opportunity to get off my response today, but I shall air mail this on Monday morning so you may have my opinion as to the Ferris letter.

I think it is perfect.

I am sure that the lady to whom it is addressed will be equally pleased, and I am hoping you both may be able to effect a rendezvous shortly, for I believe you will both have a pleasant hour together, as there will be much that goes in to make up a "literary evening".

It was good of you to let me have some idea of what was written to the literary agent. My reader wasn't perfect today, but from his efforts, I gathered there were a couple of little words that might have been altered to advantage, - but the letter isn't of importance, - the one from Baton Rouge to Miss Abbott.

In the same mail with the two items from the Clipping Service came a brief note from Dr. Marcus Wilkerson, the President of the Louisiana State University Press. He acknowledged my recent letter to him, detailing an account of the Old Louisiana Scrapbook, - appending, as I did, the Table of Contents, with my brief note to him. His letter says that the L. S. U. Press would be glad to receive the manuscript with a view to publication. That doesn't mean anything, of course, but it sounds nice. I have accordingly sent Dr. Wilkerson's letter to James, asking him to forward the manuscript to L. S. U. Press, and I have written Dr. Wilkerson that I shall be in Baton Rouge by mid-January at the latest, and in the event he has had an opportunity to look the thing over by that time, I shall be glad to drop by and see him regarding details. More than anything else, I am anxious to get that item published, - and by L. S. U. it would be perfect, - and all because of the effect it would have on the formation of the Department of Documents and Records. I think its appearance by a State press would cut a lot of ice with la belle Essae Mae.

It was the latter who sent me Dr. Wilkerson's address, and I shall use his letter to me as an excuse to write her a friendly line.

I am indebted to you for setting me straight on a couple of items on the local scene. Your brother must be illustrating the old line about life beginning at 40. Isn't it good, too, - all the way around. It is nice to think he will be well looked after in the event others close of kin should eventually change addresses.

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1051

I was glad, too, to learn of the doings at the house on the hill, and certainly the old woman who lived in her shoe had nothing on that set up. Tilloah is up and doing, I am glad to hear. It must be all that other business is forever over and done with, - thank heavens. It was nice to have news of Mr. Breyer, too. I am glad he has a place on the active list, for I am sure that goes far to keep him in a happier frame of mind, - particularly in view of his recent hospitalization, - for surely circumstances obtaining in the neighborhood of his former home must have a most depressing effect on one who, if unemployed, might find little to take up the slack of diversion.

Isn't it marvelous how all of us, - when we must, - can somehow set our minds to slamming doors on circumstances over which we have no control. I guess half the trick is having been blessed by God with interests beyond the ordinary hum-drum things of life. I was thinking especially along that line when I read of the satisfaction to be experienced in re-reading B. L. C., after all these years, following its first reading to a friend. Isn't it going to be fun re-reading it again and again. It just occurs to me that it might be nice, - eventually, - to keep a copy on the living room table of Meade Villa, - when that is taken over. I certainly find ever so much satisfaction in contemplating such an eventuality, and somehow I feel I am not alone in that.

I must congratulate you on your diligence in running across the newspaper item about la Ferris in Washington. I reckon she will be dropping me a note shortly, - as one is due, and I think she is a letter writer, but I am not waiting to hear from her before I write just a line, to go forward by air at the same time this one does, - telling her how much she has in store for her if she is so fortunate as to establish contact with a certain you lady I know. I shall be glad to send her letters to you from time to time, - if you don't mind. Yours always do I burn, and usually I don't send other peoples about, save to one whom I feel somehow is as much interested in them as I.

It was good of you to set me straight as to your present status in the chemical department. I can not imagine anything more difficult than such a job, but you are most certainly to be congratulated on having successfully mastered an understanding of a flock of data and strange formulae that must be mighty difficult, - if not altogether dull. Never having had any aptitude for such combinations, I should never be able to make any sense out of them, were I to concentrate for a million years on them, - and accordingly I admire you the more for your success. May I congratulate you, and add 550 citations!

Somebody writing from the Crescent City, reports having seen Old Man River at a party at the home of Andrew Jackson Higgins the other evening. They reported the guest as looking thin, but otherwise alright. Another letter from the same place comes from Miss Alberta who says she would like to come up here for a little while, but is afraid her water pipes might freeze. Poor girl, - that certainly would be a calamity. I am sorry to spoil the joke, but I should explain that in reality she was referring more to her house at 823 Royal Street, and not to herself. Must not write more for the moment, but thanks a million..

1052

December 13th.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Thanks much for your nice letter arriving in yesterday's post, together with the My Day clipping and the sheet from the British account book of 1778. Up to the moment, I have not received a visit from my reader and so the contents of your report must be held until later in the morning, but I wanted to acknowledge their arrival regardless.

I had rather expected a line from old Rosenwald in yesterday's post, but as none came to hand, I shall expect a line today. Not too much opportunity remains to do a prospectus between now and January 1st, but I am turning over in my mind what I shall have to say, - in the event an application is forwarded, - and so it will not be so difficult to rattle it off, once the go-ahead signal arrives. It may be that another subject will be suggested, and in that event I shall try to fashion the new subject along lines that I shall also have thought through, and in spite of the holiday season, I think I shall be able to get the thing off, - although a parfait secretaire would obviously make a more perfect job of the thing.

There was a letter to Aunt Sammie in yesterday's mail from Helen Ferris, giving a brief account of her recent jaunt to Washington. I have asked the Madam to send it along to you, thinking you would enjoy her impressions, although personal contact with her before you receive it may make it a little out of date when it actually comes to hand.

I didn't do much yesterday in the literary line. There were trucks and labor available for hauling out trash from the gardens and fertilizer back in, and what with the Madam having a stitch in her back, I waved a wand for her, and accordingly was in the open most of the time. About this time of year, after a good frost, the bananas are cut down, - the frost having cooked them a delicious brown, and dahlias, cannas, butterfly lilies need similar attention, while camellias and gardenias, - although they do not require it, do thrive a little better if they have some kind of a mulch of fallen leaves or some such put around them. One of the darkies driving an over worked truck, failed to stop as soon as he had expected in the canna department, and as an excuse remarked that "the breaks on this old outfit ain't so handsome". Handsome breaks is something I had never thought of. That's one thing that makes these darkies delicious.

(over)

1053

I suppose it is their unique ability to emulate the sayings of other people, - as remarkable as the same aptitude in small children, that gives them such unexpected coloring, - if the word may be used, - in their speech. I recall that some time back, a rock chimney had been built on one of the smaller houses, - the loom room, and as the thing reached completion, a big old black negro was up on the top of the thing, fiddling about, while other workmen were doing one thing or another, all under the gaze of a flock of white people, sitting about in the garden to observe final touches being put on the thing. In the white section, everyone was amused when the big old black negro remarked, out of a clear sky, pointing to the chimney and patting it slightly: "Ain't it darling!"

By today, I suppose the Old Louisiana Scrapbook will be in Dr. "Ilkerson's hands, and it will be nice to see what he has to say about it. For the sake of the Department of Documents, I do hope it goes over, - sooner or later. And speaking of that Department reminds me that there was a letter yesterday, dated from California, from Essae Mae, saying that she had skipped out there to be with her sister now ill until about the first week in January. I gather the Legislature will not meet in December, therefore, but may after the turn of the year. I accordingly think I shall try to make a round at Baton Rouge about the 2nd week in January, and thence, - after contacting L. S. U. Press, etc., I shall go on to "atchez. In the latter place, I want to see if I can't track down two volumes of British papers which reportedly were once there a number of years ago. As the lady who then owned them is dead, and her effects scattered, I know not where I shall begin to search for the end of the first thread leading to their locations, - but I reckon I shall eventually find it.

I must fold for the moment, but will be back again shortly. How nice it is to be assured that later today, when my little reader appears, I shall be able to hold communion with one who means so much.....

1054

December 14th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It was good to get to yesterday's report in the evening, and to find such a nice long account of things.

I appreciate the transcript of Manhattan reviews of the Beatrice Lillie show. The Fragonard and Guérain departments should wonder. I should think either of us might find it worth while just to see the sets, and then to have Miss Lillie's charades thrown in, the whole business ought to turn out just as remarkable as the review indicates. I do hope you find it possible to get a go at the piece before long.

It seems to me the last time I heard about B. Lillie was on the radio, - reporting the death of her only son, as I recall. I don't remember now if her husband, Lord Peale, had died or not. I remember so well that burlesque she used to do in singing the song that ran: "March with me to the tune of the drum, - March, March, April, May and June!"

Yesterday's mail held nothing of interest, - although I had rather expected something from old Rosenwald. I had a Christmas card from one of the Henry boys, - Dan, now in the Hawaiian Islands. Coming from that pineapple producing center, it appropriately had Santa Klaus riding on said pineapple. It struck me that a Chicago gangster, such as Capone, might well have had a similar card fashioned for himself as a personal greeting card in those mad days of the 1920's when prohibition was running wild and "pineapples" were exploding all over the place.

The childrens books arrived in the same mail with that card, - that is to say yesterday. As for the books, I concur with the Madam that they are really marvelous. I liked them so much, I took them home with me last night and turned through them after folding up my beard. I think they are quite the loveliest bit of joy for children that I remember in ever so long. Any library would be the better for their presence. One of my little friends passed by to see me, - little King Solomon, - the victim of the Black Widow, and although untutored in the arts, his re-action was one of delight to turn through the pages. Somehow Rojankovsky can do up an animal in human being's clothing and make it look humorous and convincingly natural at the same time. I guess it was teniel, or one such artist who did it so successfully with some of those LaFontaine Fables, and wasn't it W. or Vidor or somesuch that did it so touchingly with the German children's books. Lyle always

(over)

1201

1055

used to say that the older he grew, the more he liked books made up of pictures and no text, and there was an element of reflected opinion from me in those remarks.

I mentioned one of the Henry boys a couple of paragraphs back. Its mention calls to mind something rather interesting of which I speak confidentially in this instance. In these parts, birth certificates weren't issue until very recently. How often inheritances depend upon a family record, - rather than a public one, since public ones didn't exist for ever so long. Well, about the best private record is the Family Bible. The Madam always kept one for each of her several children, - wherein were written in her own hand the vital statistics of her family. Now, Dan Henry was so named from an old family friend, - a lawyer, of "atchitoches, now 95, who long looked after the Henry interests in the courts. When Dan was born, he was given the name Daniel Scarborough Henry, in honor of this family friend. Imagine how it could be that having thus named the child, in entering his name in the family Bible, his mother, instead of writing Daniel, wrote David. At some time or other although very improbably, a succession might have based its whole case on the identity of this individual, - and then, when the old family Bible was produced, it would be evident that the case revolved about another individual, since obviously the Mother of said child would most certainly not have given a wrong name to her own off-spring. But Daniel he is in the Army and in the public records now, but David is his name as appears on the family record. And I think it is one of the oddest slips of the pen I know about. Is it any wonder one must read old records with a lot of latitude, for how often might a disinterested public official make a slip when even a child's own mother could be wrong? Naturally I have never mentioned this curious entry to any one here and only Lyle and I know of it. The Bible, by the way, is in this house where it is likely to remain.

I am so glad you mentioned the Reissigs, and I know your Kaffe-Klatch was heartening, in spite of the bitter weather between Long Island and home. I always liked Madame R. much, for somehow she invariably seemed possessed of a heart quality on the good-will-toward-men side. Should you ever have an opportunity to say something on the pleasant side to her in my behalf, it would most certainly have my approval, - although you know whether it would be well to indicate that you had heard "in a roundabout way", or not. And speaking of "roundabout way", what in the world do you suppose ever happened to Sven and all. Since last May I have heard nothing from the boy friend, whom I suppose may be in South America, although I merely assume that. I must write him eventually to find out how things turn down that way. I asked him not to write me during the summer, as his pen pushing was such that my little readers could make nothing of it, and la jalousie prevented me from getting an interpretation that was satisfactory from one old enough to read, - and so I thought it better just to let the whole thing lapse temporarily. At long last, I realize the information as to what has been turning in the world during the past 4 years might come to hand, beforewarded to a Bureau for deciphering and so relayed back. We shall eventually see. Must skip and thanks much for reports covering la Guild and all.....

1201

1056

December 16th.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

I write you at a curious time, - 4:15, Central War Time, at the conclusion of a little talk by Sinclair Lewis, following the Metropolitan's airing of Faust.

To hand in today's mail came the enclosed letter which speaks for itself. It is of course heartening that Dr. Wilkerson of L. S. U. Press liked the manuscript. May he be successful in putting it over with the Board. I count so much on this volume as being a stepping stone in the Department of Archives or rather Department of Documents, that I shall be pleased no end if it is actually brought out by L. S. U. Press, - an added point of pressure on the Legislature and la belle Essae Mae.

Assuming that the Old Louisiana item goes over, I have no doubt that the Old Mississippi Scrapbook and similar ones on Texas and Oklahoma might readily follow by the same publishers. Surely L. S. U. Press would undertake the Old Mississippi number, and if they would not be interested in Oklahoma and Texas, then most assuredly the Presses of the universities of those States would. Mr. Pipies knows the Oklahoma set up, and I know the Texas numbers in Austin, so we ought to work that out alright.

If only I can get the Rosenwald thing, it will assist me so much in getting someone to take a lot of stuff that I could dictate readily to round out what is lacking to complete the Old Mississippi Scrapbook, - and at the same time, put the slices lacking to round out the Old Natchez Scrapbook, - or whatever the thing may be called, which will be based on the news columns from Natchez, - 1800 to the present. I am ever so anxious to get at that, for I have a feeling it might be an item that would enjoy a long pull, - particularly with pilgrims, - not so much the historically minded as those who like to turn through random things.

No news from Lyle, and may he remain where he is for a while. It is said that Frances Benjamin Johnston is looking forward with eagerness to coming up to Melrose for a visit, - and for work. The more I hear about her, the more I wonder how that visit will turn out. They say she is both

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1057

capable and cuss-ed, as dictatorial as anyone could be, and a hitter of the bottle to quite an extent. Add to this combination her 80 odd years, and you really have something to contemplate. Nevertheless, there is the artist shining through all this curious combination, and since she is currently doing New Orleans, and will no doubt do a lot of stuff between there and here, - and, - if I have any influence, - will do a lot more in Natchez, - then surely there ought to be some swell material for future use in the negatives she strikes off with her multiple assortment of cameras.

Just one more thing, and then I must get on:-

As for the Scrapbook idea for the various States, I suppose 48 such might be done, - not to mention such additional ones as individual cities of popularity, but somehow I would like to set aside one such, - possibly South Carolina or Charleston, - for a final volume, to be accomplished, - undertaken and finished, - at some future time, save in three or four years, when circumstance would enable the co-ordination of two people whose common enthusiasms would tend to make the thing a labor of love and a joy of fulfillment.....

1058

Monday Night at Melrose.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

A good report to hand, and the world accordingly seems bright and gay. The attached photo came to hand today from Miss Nellie. As a photo, it isn't so much, but perhaps it is sufficient to enable you to guess that it shows a little section of Meade Villa. The wing is that occupied by Feliciana Wailes and Miss Sue Covington during the years when B. L. C. Wailes lived there. In the main house, the room on the upper gallery is the one in which Miss Nellie was born in 1864. I think I remarked in another Memorandum that the wing that formerly balance the one shown in this photo has subsequently disappeared. It was the one housing B. L. C.'s Cabinet of Metals, etc, now in L. S. U., and his library was there, too. If and when the whole place can be acquired, put back in order, and the left wing restored, then you can readily see how nicely the whole unit would lend itself to a private apartment in each of the wings, with the main structure reserved for living room, dining room, guest rooms, etc.

I am unable to make out who the belles are in the photographs, but I reckon Miss Nellie will explain those in a later letter. Eventually I should be glad if we might paste this snapshot in our copy of Gentleman of the Old Natches.

I shall have an eye out for the packages you mention, and in advance I shall express the joy which is in store, not only for our little friends, but also for me. La Seigne will receive her package shortly, too, but when they arrive, I shall sequester mine and ours all to myself.

Up to the present writing, nothing has come from old Rosenwald, to whom I sent a telegram today, saying as much. After all, about ten days remain to fill out the stuff and write the prospectus, - not to mention the days which will not be worth anything, what with people who may usurp some of the ten days during this holiday season.

During the past couple of days, I have been thinking about a book I should like to do, but I think I shall save it for later. Whether it should be done with James now, - or with another later, depends much upon a variety of circumstances, not the least of which is dependent upon what James did or proposes to do, with the sections of the Erwin and Prudhomme diaries, which, as I understand from the letter forwarded to you in my last communication, he says he removed from the manuscript to be submitted to L. S. U. Press. What I should like to do with a book, - the

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1059

one I have in mind at the moment, would be a plantation thing. The idea would be to select 5 or 6 diaries from different sections of Louisiana, - say one from West Feliciana, one from the New Orleans neighborhood, one from Terrebonne, - on the Gulf Coast, one from Bayou Grosse Tete, - say the Erwin, one from the Alexandria neighborhood, one from Natchitoches, - say the Prudhomme, and one from North Louisiana, - say the Shreveport area. Using each as the basis of a long chapter, or possibly two chapters, quote extensively from each ante bellum diary, and at the same time do a picture of the plantation itself and the neighboring ones, the people, the events transpiring in Louisiana during the time the diaries were kept, etc., etc. How do you think that would go as a book. Obviously it would be pretty much a local item, - I suppose, - but it might be lots of fun to do, what with the visiting about the countryside it would require, and the documents to be sought out and explored, - especially on cosy winter nights at Meade Villa.

Well, we shall see. If only the L. S. U. Press comes across, and by so doing, makes a big boost in the Department of Documents, - well, then we shall see what the next step may lead to.

I reckon you are not thanking me for writing so long a letter which is bound to arrive when you will be terribly busy. But possibly you can set it aside for reading when the big rush is over and you have a moment to relax, - and contemplate tomorrow.

I shall have an eye out for the packages you mention, and in advance I shall express the joy which is in store, not only for our little friends, but also for me. As the packages will arrive, I shall express my thanks to you, and when they arrive, I shall express my thanks to you.

Up to the present writing, nothing has come from old Rosenwald, to whom I sent a telegram today, saying so much. After all, about ten days remain to fill out the story and write the prospectus, - not to mention the copy which will not be worth anything, what with people who may turn some of the ten days during this holiday season.

During the past couple of days, I have been thinking about a book - should like to do, but I think I shall save it for later. I shall be some with "some now, - or with another later. I have been thinking about a book - should like to do, but I think I shall save it for later. I shall be some with "some now, - or with another later. I have been thinking about a book - should like to do, but I think I shall save it for later. I shall be some with "some now, - or with another later.

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1060

December 20th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

"Rural Racial Relations" - how do you like that?

I laugh as I hear you rolling those "r's", and the members of the Board had better be sober if they try to read those words aloud.

In fine, old Rosenwald came through with a letter, together with application forms, in yesterday's mail. The letter from la Baygood was very friendly. As a big hearted gesture, she said she was allowing an extra two weeks, - until January 15th, - to give me added opportunity to prepare the prospectus. That is kind, - in view of the lateness of the hour in forwarding the blanks. She doesn't know it, but it was late February or early March last year when out of a clear sky, I urged James to file an application, - regardless of the January 1st deadline, and as you know, he won without difficulty, while I lost.

Well, be that as it may, the time concession, I suppose, indicates interest, - for whatever that is worth.

And in the letter, - which I do not forward because I need some of the phraseology, - la belle Baygood expressed herself as finding the general subject of the Cane River color problem of of great significance, - they all love that word, - and ideal for a study. Well, so be it, - that is what they will get. She also remarked that I shouldn't fear the word mulatto so long as it represented a distinction in analyzing the local picture. According to her, that word is very important in studying the British West Indies and Haiti, which makes it alright for me to use. All of which is very fascinating, of course.

Well, I shall today begin exploring the scrapbook on the Breville and see what it has to say about the people in this locality. I think I shall entitle the prospectus:

THE CANE RIVE NEGRO, - a Pattern in Rural Racial Relations.

So there you have all the "r's", and you can do what you wish with them. What the Board will do is something else again, but as la Baygood says she is coming to Meadrose at Easter time, I reckon she has me slated for an award. Perhaps she had better.

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1061

In yesterday's mail, too, came a letter from Miss Robina, saying that she would be glad to put the thing in perfect typed form, if I care to send her my rough draft. I shall be glad to accept her offer, to be assured that the thing is letter perfect. We are scheduled to have visitors today, so we shall probably not get much done, for even though I were able to get a reader, - which I could not, what with cotton still in the field, - I still couldn't explore the Ile Brevelle scrapbook, as much of it is in the Madam's hand, and sometimes even she has difficulty in deciphering the data, and what in the world would a poor reader, - not too well tutored, do with the thing.

I reckon the packages of which you spoke in your recent letter will come to hand about today or tomorrow. The mails are so bogged down at the moment, however, that instead of taking one day for a first class letter from Melrose to Shreveport, it now seems to require about three days, so it is possible that parcel post items may lag even longer. But I shall keep my eye open, for more than one heart is going to be made glad with the kindness that stems from afar. Yesterday morning, between 5 and 9, I knocked off 28 letters, mostly prosaic enough, to people for the most part living in Louisiana and Mississippi, - and this morning must hit off a few more links to get my personal relations in balance.

My departure for Baton Rouge will depend upon how the Cane River Negro progresses, but I am hoping to have that item wrapped up and on its way by the 5th of January, for I am anxious to see the Board down there, and get the Scrapbook under way, as a lever to pry open the Department of Documents.

They say it isn't a good idea to count one's chickens before they are hatched, and yet I want to inquire about one point, on the assumption the chickens do hatch. In meeting past advances, - should the award be granted, - do you think it would be best to forward monthly remittances, as against previous advances, or would it be better to deposit the same in a local bank as against future withdrawals?

There are a half a dozen other things I would like to talk about, Meade Villa, further search for the missing colonial account books, etc., etc., but I must get on, and shall accordingly leave them for another sitting. I apologize for such a long Memorandum at a time when the Clipping Service must be so busy but.....

(over)

1062

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

According to a million radio programs, one hundred thirty million Americans are "dreaming of a white Christmas", but the same cannot be said for this neighborhood.

Ours is going to be colored regardless, and we are going to like it.

At the present writing, it looks as though we shall have few if any guests, and as for myself, I shall ask only my sepia acquaintances to pass by my house on that day.

Yesterday's mail was thin, in everything save cards. Assuming that you may find it convenient to prepare for the arrival of such an item, I shall spoil a surprise by telling you that shortly after the 25th, a pastel shawl will go forward to you, and in one edge will be woven the first name and the date. I mention this foreseeing the possibility that you might care to drop a word that someplace like H. Macy will weave in a name for anyone who cares to have it done, and thus by anticipating the thing, its advent may be scimmed over without incident. While we are on the subject, so that you may better be equipped to acknowledge the same, I would say that it was woven in North Carolina during the past year, and that the pastel shades are from vegetable dyes. I personally think it is pretty, whether used as a shawl today or as a sofa drape at Meade Villa or some such place eventually.

In mentioning this fact, I am but following a custom, instituted between Miss Robina and me, to provide each other with particulars in advance, so that we may always be prepared. I reckon the identifying name is so indistinct that it might be passed over without notice, unless one were looking for it particularly, but I thought that the knowledge of its existence might offer an opportunity for making the seem casual on its arrival, providing you should care to take it to a place where others might notice the item.

(over)

3001

1063

And speaking of Miss Robina, reminds me that in a letter of a day or two back, she remarked that Victor Herbert's son, a cattle man from Texas, I believe, was in her office to give her some letters, dressed in the big hat, somewhat florid Texas style, as I recall.

This brought to mind a question I asked her to find the answer for, when next she encountered the man. That is: was some particular person responsible for the greater part of the words that are a delightful counter part of the Victor Herbert music?

Of course most people who have heard of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, can't for the life of them tell which of the two men wrote the music and which the words. As I understand it, the critics agree that the words and music are almost perfect in their relation to each other. I have long felt the same way about the words and the music of Victor Herbert's Operettas, and I should like to know if one individual was responsible for the word. Perhaps you know about this point, but I shall pass along the information regardless, should it come to hand.

The eldest son of this family will not be home for Christmas, but I shall be interested in talking with him the next time he does come. According to his brother, he was recently in Warm Springs for an hour's conference with the head man there, and following the hour's conference, there was a couple of hours of personal conversation. That should be ever so interesting, I should think.

Yesterday's cards included a nice one from Rosalind and Jimmie Aswell. They have asked me up to their place, between Hatchitoches and Grand Ecore, but I shall make that later in the season. I think you know that Rosalind was formerly Mrs. Alvin Douglass, and since Melvin Douglass, Jr., in military school, spends his vacation with his mother, it would be as well to pass by their home in the woods after the family has gone back to their several interests.

There are other points, but time is running against me, and I shall have to let this slide momentarily.....

(revo)

1064

December 23rd, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Merely a hurried report this morning.

The package came through nicely, - the one for the Madam and the one for the children of strangers. It's needless to say that the Madam was enchanted with the tile, which is really lovely, nor need I add how happy a lot of darkies are going to be on Christmas morning, thanks to your thoughtfulness and generosity.

I enclose a letter which may be of some interest, but

nothing especial, I guess. Apparently I am going to get a year's subscription to the Natchez Democrat, - for the Lambert's publish that paper, and I believe that is what the reference is all about. It is certainly sweet of Dora to provide so much material for me throughout the ensuing year, and at its close, I shall have the thing bound, which will add another item to our reference library.

One thing the letter indicates is that the Mississippi Scrapbook is being wrapped up for eventual submission to the publishers, on the basis of one man's judgement. I don't want to be fussy on that point, but this tendency too settle things without a consultation is vaguely disturbing, for one or twice it has led to the omission of very important points whose value is not realized by the collaborator. I must bring up this point when I see him. You will of course treat this point confidentially.

Something amusing just happened between this paragraph and the one above. The cook came to see me. She has a son in the Army, and she is trying to get an allotment from the Government for partial support of her two small illegitimate children. It seems there is much red tape to be gone through, and in consulting with a relative who has been through the same mill successfully, the cook came to tell me this:

"Cousin Lug say that us-es ought to write to Mr. Roosevelt, but Sam, he say us-es ought to write to D. C. Washington. What does you think?"

Lord, have mercy, is what I think, and that is that.

Must gallop for the moment.....

2301

1065

December 27th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Well, the best day of the year has come and gone, and a lot of people I know are the happier because of thoughtfulness stemming from your general direction. Your air mail Christmas letter arrived on Saturday, and it goes without saying that we were delighted to have it. Somehow it was just what we needed most to make the week end carry the real spirit that transcends all other emotions at Christmas time.

In the same mail came your gift to Aunt Cammie, which is perfectly lovely and which she likes ever so much. I reckon she may already have acknowledged it. The package for the plantation came through in the same mail, and I reckon the third package will be here today.

I have had neuralgia all the week end, - my left ear, jaw and eye, but I kept it down alright, - the pain, not the jaw, by pain killing pills, and merely used my aches to retire from the big house early.

On Saturday night, - no Sunday night, I walked the mile or so along Cane River, down to deliver your packages to Clemence and Mary Frances. They were at home, and looking as neat as two pins. I think they were twice proud because there were a few friends there with them, and it gave them delight to put their beautifully wrapped packages on a little table for Monday's Christmas. Clemence was wearing a new wig under a very fetching little head gear, - a sort of swirl, the wig seemed to appear in the rather uncertain light of the oil lamp. I sat and talked with them for half an hour, and then, under the warm, slightly veiled moon, I came back home. A tall boy, - looking like a rotogravure reproduction of Gary Cooper, walked home with me. His name is Jack, and he was aching with neuralgia on the right side of his face, so that we could sit long before my fireplace, toast the respective sides of our heads, and do a lot of talking.

One of the Henrys, - J. H., gave me some whiskey, and when five o'clock came on Christmas morning, I was able to open a bottle and begin dispensing cheer to my first visitors, - Peter, Puny, Mitchell and Little King. I stuck to Louisiana coffee, which was about all I consumed all day, for food didn't seem to appeal, and the thought of after effects of whiskey, although probably good for my cold, was not particularly attractive as regards an after-math, what with the neuralgia added to it. (over)

1066

Mattie, the cook, and Aurellia, the house girl, came by about 7 with breakfast, and Sam Peace, Mattie's erstwhile husband, swelled the group.

Then came Yank, a big old black boy of 50 summers, and King Hunter, Clemence's son, and we all exchanged greetings and good cheer.

At 9 I went over to the big house and sat with the Madam for a while. Pat was as happy as a clam, having been given a marvelous pair of slippers, which Christian had left with me and which had disappeared from my house some time back. He also got a pair of Christian's boots. I said nothing.

Back home at 10, more guests came. Clemence arrived first, to say how happy she and Mary Frances were with their gifts and to ask me to say so to you on their behalf. Then came Jack and his brother, Ezra, and Earle Breux, my best reader, and Nathaniel and Robert Anthony and his son, Attrice, a big old boy of 25 who doesn't look like his name sounds. And there was Fugabou and Pal and Sweet Milk, a big old black negro from Little River, and so on and so forth. And everybody was gay, and there weren't any white people in my house, and we all chatted and laughed and talked, and everybody on leaving, from time to time, declared that their day had been a happy one.

And Monday was a kind of hold over from Christmas Day, but the warm weather of the 25th turned chill and rainy on the 26th. The clerk was taking the day off, and as the Henrys, when they attempt to do the mail, always get it mixed up somehow or other, I posted nothing, but at the store I saw Bill Jones. He lives on the other side of Cane River, - a mulatto, and University of Chicago graduate, who very successfully operates with his two brothers, Randolph and Nolan, the several thousand acre plantation left them by their father. I am think of using the Jones as exhibit A, of the mulattoes who have successfully maintained their economic status in this region, in contrast to the Metoyers who have gradually gone down economically. I accordingly wanted Bill's transcript or rather the abstract of a couple of his plantations, the better to trace down the ownership from the original French grant. Bill invited me to drive up to his house with him, and I accepted, and spent the morning there. I had my first whiskey then, and the morning was merry, with talk exclusively on the racial side. Nolan and Randolph were at home, - a spick and span modern house, heated with gas, etc., etc. Two other boys came in and then a third, and by the time I got back to Melrose, I felt quite rosey, even though the Devil was riding the East Wind, and the weather was disagreeable.

I reckon all these details must be boring enough but perhaps

1067

the mere enumeration of names and doings may give some concept of how things turned here over the week end.

On the lighter side, I give you this as a sample of what Mattie conceives as to Who's Who in the nation. The allotment she is to receive from her soldier son in the Army is slow in coming through. - Or did I tell you this? - Well anyway, I shall repeat it, on a chance. She said that someone had told her she ought to write to Mr. D. Roosevelt about it, but someone else had advised her to write directly to Mr. D. C. Washington.

Under separate envelopes, I am sending a couple of clauder's which I thought you might like. Perhaps you would like one for your office or your home, or perhaps you would like to give one to your girl friend. Mrs. George Lester of Waverly Plantation did them, and I got them last autumn when visiting there. I am not sure if the calendar is for 44 or 45, but possibly it doesn't matter. Don't you think there is some kind of artistic justice in the fact that a contemporary artist, like Mrs. Lester, living in St. Francisville where Audubon did so much of his painting, should now be reproducing his work?

Up to the present writing, nothing whatsoever came through from Lyle as a holiday greeting to the Madam. Two or three letters in the past few days have reported him as having been seen about New Orleans and looking well but thin. It must be he hasn't gotten around to "set-up his typewriter" yet. I do think he is a bag not to have dropped a card or telephoned the Madam, - it would have taken so little time and effort and it would have meant so much to her. - even though she disclaims any depression in not having a line. severe electric storm on Christmas night cut off our current at 6:30, so I didn't hear anything from then on, although I did hear some excellent things from Friday on through until Sunday night. I heard two christmas stories of which I must speak to you at some other sitting, - one of them particularly striking because of the originality of thought it embraced. But time for the postman to be heading in is upon me, and as I want to be there when he arrives, I shall fold up at this point and head out for the store.

I am mighty thankful for the nicest Christmas I have known, and all because there is such a pleasant melange stirring in my soul, - Clipping Service, "eade Villa and Heaven alone knows what all.....

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

Under even date, I have already filed one Memorandum, but as the mail has just come, and as this letter will not go forward until tomorrow's post, I shall take pen in hand a second time.

The Virginia diary is here, and how may I say thank you, - thank you twice, as a matter of fact, for the volume will afford much delight for an endless number of perusals, while the line on the card, enclosed in the volume will burn brightly forever.

I have looked forward to seeing the volume ever since I learned of its publication, and now that it is here, I enjoy just truning through the pages, noting the charming illustrations, and contemplating the various arrangements of the margins, etc., indicating where the original documents appear and where the notes, etc., are included. I shall be speaking of this item often in the future. I may not mention Meade Villa often, but I leave it to you if it will not be in my heart about 24 hours of the day.

And your letter came in the same post, acknowledging the receipt of the photographs. It was good of you to include the duplicates of the letters to Mrs. Ferris and to James. I am certain your contact with la belle Helene will be pleasureable, and I shall be thinking of you both during this coming first week in January. A few days hence, and I shall let you know how my plans are shping up for the Baton Rouge, St. Francisville and Natchez go-round. I shall probably get away early in the second week, but much depends upon the neuralgia, which is holding up some of the stuff I should be doing on the Rosenwald thing. It is curious how I can chat endlessly with you regardless of the annoyance of physical pain, and yet seem dumb when it comes to thinking out stuff for the prospectus. Perhaps this is because for the Rosenwald I feel I have to think my thoughts through, while in this Memorandum, I merely let my heart run along without bothering to see if my statements are well phrased or even thought out, - since I instinctively feel they will be understood regardless.

One of the most striking things of today's mail was the fact that after writing you this morning, sealing it and posting, your letter should come to hand mentioning your girl friend, - I almost said, our girl friend, for I think in my letter to you, referring to the Audubon calendars, that you might care to give her one. And on receipt of your letter, I was glad that I had mentioned her, for now I feel that I was anticipating a little the sheer pleasure I now feel in the realization that we have someone with whom we may share our joys.

over

1069

Sometimes it seems to me as though God once in a while selects a rare soul in whose person He fashions a precious vessel to hold a maximum of human kindness, and "our" girl friend, although I have but scarcely passed by her when too many people were milling about, exuded that radiation of infinite gentleness, understanding and goodness. I am more happy than I can express in words that she is to share our aspirations with us, for with "men of good will", the joys of one are the joys of all the others, and in helping one of their number to cushion his shocks, so they soften their own dispaire, - and equally so, in rejoicing with one for some Divine blessing or other, they somehow share that blessing, too. Praise God for His goodness to us, - all three.

It is certainly sweet of you both to think of things for Mary Frances, and I know that what you send will serve to the ultimate in helping her along her way. Now that cotton picking is about over and that school has begun in earnest, the clothes will come in most timely, and Clemence, who can do tricks with a needle as well as a paint brush, will make alterations in a jiffy, so that Mary Frances may start off almost immediately following the receipt of the package, all girded up for her dip into education. It is a three to four mile walk from where she lives to her school, - which really makes quite a trip for her and some of the younger children who go the same distance, - the round trip of course running up to 6 or 8 miles. In the autumn and spring months, the children don't mind that walk, but when a chill wind howls down out of Texas along about January or February, they look like little frozen sticks of chocolate, skirring along through the cold. I think it was one of Mr. Rutledge's darkies on the Santee River in South Carolina who said, relative to not appearing for work on a frosty morning: "God never intended folks to work when it is cold". I reckon the children in these parts have the same idea about getting their education.

If Mrs. Haygood comes here in April, as she threatens to do, I am hoping that I may do something about local educational facilities for negro education, through her proximity to the Rosenwald millions which must be expended along this line. Getting such money isn't easy, but it will be sheer pleasure to take a try at it through such a medium.

Two letters from James in this morning's mail ask me to do an introduction for the Old Mississippi Scrapbook, the history of ante-bellum houses in the Natchez area, and an explanatory introduction to 8 chapters in the book. It's a fairly large order, under the circumstances, but I shall do what I can before leaving here, although the prospectus for Rosenwald, of course, must be done first. Accordingly I shall fold up at this point, and, after taking another pill, roll up my sleeves and get to going. But not before saying once more how much today's gift, both in the printed and typed and hand written form mean.....

mean..... I think I shall fold up at this point, and, after taking another pill, roll up my sleeves and get to going. But not before saying once more how much today's gift, both in the printed and typed and hand written form mean..... I think I shall fold up at this point, and, after taking another pill, roll up my sleeves and get to going. But not before saying once more how much today's gift, both in the printed and typed and hand written form mean.....

1070

December 30th, 1944.

Memorandum to Clipping Service:

It is good to have your report following the receipt of "The Shape of Things to Come". I am enchanted that it symbolized what it was intended to suggest. On the radio, I sometimes hear an advertisement which goes something like this: "What is the 14 day Palmolive plan?"

Well, I am beginning to wonder a little what my 14 day of display, immediately head is going to be like. The prospectus must be in Chicago within that time. My neuralgia hangs on, making me feel like a stewed owl that has just fallen down a steep flight of stairs, hanging on his ear. The Madam took to her bed a couple of days ago. She is quite out of commission, - a cold, I guess, without any evidences of one. Possibly it is the influenza. I don't know what it is, and assume that it may not be serious. The doctor has been here a couple of times, following a long sitting on my part on Thursday night or Friday morning, when I stood by from 2:30 am. until daylight. But I wasn't much good, since I felt as though I had the pip too, and following the doctor's visit, the Madam wouldn't take any of his medicine, and so we are at that point, - which is nowhere. And old Rosenwald hard on my heels and, stupid as I feel, with no one to read notes to me from the Ile Breville scrapbook, I would seem as though I were temporarily up a tree. But I shall be able to get myself down, alright. Especially, as I recall that the dead-line, as fashioned for convenience by la Haygood, can be made elastic, if necessary. I intended to speak of verti-vert in a recent note. A couple of the roots are attached herewith. It grows well in this locality, being a member of the cane family. I think, if you hold the roots, crumpled in your hand for a moment, to moisten them just a little, you will notice a distinct aroma. People here say the perfume last for about a century, and they use it for sweetening armchairs, closets, etc. I am not sure I am crazy about it, but aromatic plants have always interested me, and I accordingly mention this one to you.

(over)

1071

I heard a delicious story on the radio on Christmas day. Perhaps you heard it, too. But, foreseeing other circumstances might have prevented, I shall run the risk of repetition herewith:

Long after Christ had departed from this earth, his Mother was one day walking along a byway, hard by her native city. It was sundown and joyful children, playing in the field, were rollicking homeward at the close of day. The sound of their happy voices depressed Mary, and she rested for a moment on a rock by the side of the road, and thinking of past events in her own family, she wept.

Passing by at the moment was a woman whom Mary did not recognize. She seeing Mary in tears, the woman paused and inquired the cause. Mary explained her depression, saying that when she thought of what had gone on by way of disappointment in her life, she felt moved to tears.

"You see," she explained to the woman whom she failed to recognize, "I had a son. His name was Jesus."

Sympathetically, but her own emotions held in restraint, the woman comforted Mary, and pointed out to her that after all, there was much the Mother of Jesus had by way of comfort, and concluded with these words: -

"After all, even though I feel I should not give way to tears, I can nevertheless share your sorrows with you."

"You see, I also had a son. His name was Judas."

I like that story, and it will serve me many a time when I myself sometimes forget that there are others who may have more rights than I.

Since beginning this letter, six different darkies have tapped on my door to ask for advice on one point or another, and to be given a cup of coffee to get the day going. I reckon this memorandum therefore is a little more out of joint than usual, but I know you will forgive its lack of coherence. Now I must skip with this to the postman, and then see what is to be done next at the big house. In a way, 1944 will be gone when this note comes to hand, but 1944 will always remain with me as one that held a heap of happiness for me, and 1945 will be the happier because of all the pleasant things I shall carry over into it, all tucked down secretly in my heart.

(over)